TARGET KANSAS CITY/LET LAWRENCE LIVE

Events surrounding ABC's The Day After — November 20-21, 1983

Joshua Baran,
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October 23, 1983

Dear Friends

Enclosed is a copy of the new speaker's manual specially designed to be used around the ABC film, THE DAY AFTER. Feel free to adapt it to your own needs in any way you see fit. Use the entire manual or just a few sections. We have tried to include all the most important details so that your speakers are well briefed for radio and television interviews.

We are sending master copies only to the headquarters of each organization, so you will need to distribute copies to your local chapters and organizers ASAP. Remember, THE DAY AFTER will air on Sunday evening, November 20. Potential speakers should receive this manual a few weeks in advance so as to prepare. This manual can be copied and distributed freely.

THE DAY AFTER presents us with an extraordinary opportunity. Let's make the best use of it.

Best wishes,

Josh Baran

Mark J Graham

"There is no more important issue than the avoidance of nuclear war. Whatever your interests, passions or goals, they and you are threatened fundamentally by the prospect of nuclear war. We have achieved the capability for the certain destruction of our civilization and perhaps our species as well. I find it increadible that any thinking person would not be concerned in the deepest way about this issue."

Carl Sagan

THE DAY AFTER: SPEAKER'S MANUAL

November, 1983

This manual is designed for speakers and those appearing on radio and television in connection with the showing of ABC's THE DAY AFTER. THE DAY AFTER will be shown on ABC on Sunday, November 20, 1983.

This manual was produced by citizens concerned about the inreasing danger of nuclear war. It is not affiliated with ABC or the making or distribution of THE DAY AFTER.

Included in this packet is the Viewer's Guide to THE DAY AFTER which was prepared by the Cultural Information Service. It is reprinted by permission for educational purposes only.

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November 1983

On November 20, ABC will air the most important television film ever made. THE DAY AFTER, starring Jason Robards and Steven Guttenberg, graphically depicts the effects of a nuclear war on the heartland of America. It is possible that nearly 60 million people will, in this one night, face the reality of nuclear devastation.

The showing of THE DAY AFTER presents the anti-nuclear war movement with an extraordinary opportunity. We must use the film as part of a larger educational and organizing effort, reminding millions of people that nuclear war is not inevitable and that they can become directly involved in the drive to end the arms race. Movies do not organize people: people organize people.

This packet has been prepared for speakers and those who will be appearing on radio and television both before and after the film airs. It is designed to help you feel more comfortable in talking about THE DAY AFTER since you will not have seen the film prior to its airing. This material should <u>not</u> be given to the press or widely distributed.

We assume that you have experience speaking or appearing on local talk shows. We also assume that you are familiar with the principle issues in the nuclear arms debate including the effects of nuclear weapons, civil defense, the arms race, weapon systems, psychologcial effects, and constructive efforts to end the arms race. This packet will help you in framing your statements and responses both before and after the film is shown.

This is a unique opportunity - let's make the most of it.

ORGANIZATION CONTACT:

FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY

THE DAY AFTER

...beyond imagining

"THE DAY AFTER," THE STARKLY REALISTIC DRAMA OF NUCLEAR CONFRONTATION AND ITS DEVASTATING EFFECT ON A GROUP OF AVERAGE AMERICAN CITIZENS, WILL AIR NOV. 20

– – – – –

Among the Stars in Two-Hour, 15-Minute "ABC Theatre" Special Motion Picture Presentation Are Jason Robards, Jobeth Williams, Steven Guttenberg, John Cullum and John Lithgow

After nearly three years of development and production, "The Day After," a dramatic two-hour, 15-minute motion picture that will portray with stark realism the catastrophe of a nuclear confrontation and its devastating effect on a group of average American citizens, will be telecast as a special "ABC Theatre" presentation, **SUNDAY, NOV. 20,** at 8:00 p.m., EST, on the ABC Television Network, it was announced by Brandon Stoddard, President, ABC Motion Pictures, Inc.

"We have lived for nearly four decades with the terrifying threat of an apocalyptic nuclear war and have all wondered what would happen to us if it were ever to occur," Mr. Stoddard stated in making the announcement. "This film will provide an unrelenting and detailed view of a nuclear attack on the United States and what the effects might be on average citizens living in Kansas, far removed from political origins or explanations. It is our hope that 'The Day After' will inspire the nations of this earth, their people and their leaders, to find the means to avert the fateful day."

The film was photographed primarily on location in Lawrence, Kansas. Robert Papazian, whose credits include the Christopher Award-winning drama, "Crisis At Central High," was the producer, and Nicholas Meyer ("Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan") was the director. Edward H. Hume, whose previous work has included the highly acclaimed ABC television movie, "21 Hours At Munich," wrote the teleplay. For the project, Mr. Hume devoted more than six months solely to research. Much of his scenario is based on a 151-page Congressional study by the office of Technology Assessment titled, "The Effects of Nuclear War." He also consulted a number of private and governmental agencies.

Starring in the film are two-time Oscar winner Jason Robards, Jobeth Williams, Steven Guttenberg, John Cullum, 1982 Oscar nominee John Lithgow ("The World According to Garp"), Bibi Besch, Lori Lethin, Amy Madigan, Jeff East, Georgann (cq) Johnson, William Allen Young, Calvin Jung, Lin McCarthy, Dennis Lipscomb, Clayton Day, Doug Scott, Ellen Anthony and Kyle Aletter.

(MORE)

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In the drama, life goes on as usual against a backdrop of ever-growing world tension until the tension breaks with devastating fury. Among those trapped in the horror are Dr. Russell Oakes (Jason Robards), a respected heart surgeon who must put all his medical skills to the test when, after the attack, he finds himself trapped in a small hospital where he must administer to the devastating wounds of the survivors while not knowing the fate of his own family; Farmer Jim Dahlberg (John Cullum) and his family, whose preparations for a daughter's wedding are shattered by the attack; Alison Ransom (Amy Madigan), a woman awaiting the birth of her first child not knowing what kind of world her baby will find; and Airman McCoy (William Allen Young), a young, married soldier who finds himself wandering aimlessly among the survivors after the destruction of the missile silo to which he was assigned.

The program will contain the following advisory: "Although based on scientific fact, this film is fiction. Because the graphic depiction of the effects of a nuclear war may not be suitable for younger viewers, parental discretion is advised."

"The Day After" is an ABC Circle Film.

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THE DAY AFTER: Synopsis

It is business as usual in America's heartland -- its wheatfields and farmhouses, schools and sports arenas, city parks and bustling Board of Trade -- as **THE DAY AFTER** begins. Cardiologist Russ Oakes is making his rounds at a Kansas City Hospital. At a church near their farm, the Dahlberg family is holding a wedding rehearsal. Going to work at a Minuteman Missile launch site 20 miles from Kansas City, Airman William McCoy and his buddies plan fishing trips and romantic escapades. In short vignettes, we get to know these people at work and at home. We see their squabbles and affectionate moments as they cope with the normal dilemmas of changing family relationships.

Yet unattended at first behind the hum of everyday life an ominous note is growing louder on television and radio broadcasts. East and West Germany want to be reunited, bringing the Soviet Union into direct conflict with the U.S. and its NATO allies. The U.S. protests the presence of Soviet tanks in the region, while the Soviet foreign minister claims they were provoked by the deployment of American Pershing missiles in Europe. Tension mounts quickly. The Soviets blockade West Berlin. NATO breaks through the East German lines; Soviet planes invade West German airspace. There is heavy fighting.

As the situation escalates, so does the anxiety of local residents. Lying in bed, Dr. Oakes and his wife recall the Cuban Missile Crisis. He reassures her that since it didn't happen then it won't happen now. People just aren't that crazy.

At the hospital the next morning, doctors discuss the latest rumor: Moscow is being evacuated. They ponder the evacuation of Kansas City. One doctor remarks that the only place to go would be the Yukon, and that Hiroshima was peanuts compared to what modern nuclear war would be like.

35 miles away, at the University Hospital in Lawrence, a nurse asks a doctor about emergency procedures as they wait for Dr. Oakes to arrive to teach a class. Yet their attention is preempted by a woman in labor and new students who require preregistration physicals. Many students are leaving to be with their families but one young man, seemingly unconcerned, goes to get a haircut. Around him customers are trying to assess their own situation. They wonder how Kansas- "in the middle of nowhere" -could be effected. Someone points out that since there are 150 Minuteman silos in Missouri every place is a potential target. There is no nowhere anymore.

Driving to Lawrence on a road already jammed with cars, Dr. Oakes listens to the news. Nuclear devices have been exploded in Europe. Although the government says that there is no immediate danger, Americans are urged to proceed to emergency shelters. He pulls off the road to call his wife but the only public telephone already has a long line of frantic people trying to reach their loved ones. In a grocery store, people panic as they grab food and batteries.

At his farm, Jim Dahlberg tells his son to take cans of milk to the basement. Unwilling to admit what is happening, his wife continues her wedding preparations.

In Europe, NATO headquarters has been hit by a nuclear weapon. Underground in the Missouri missile silos, the men unlock the codes to enable the missiles. One Airman notes that whether the U.S. or the Soviets struck first doesn't matter: both sides will be destroyed either way. While citizens watch openmouthed, bright flashes streak the sky in every direction as missiles speed out of the ground into the air. Sirens wail, colliding cars block the streets, throngs of people run for shelter. Then, a blinding light, and the mushroom cloud rises in a yellow haze.

Through spectacular special effects, we witness the horror of a nuclear attack -- people are irradiated and vaporized into nothingness, houses explode, skyscrapers crumble, billowing waves of fire outdistance those running vainly to escape. In silence we are shown aerial views of the flattened devastation that was once Kansas City.

We return to an earth where life for survivors will never be the same. People whose biggest problem yesterday was a teenaged daughter staying out all night must now confront issues of basic survival. In a world with no electricity and little uncontaminated food or water, private property has become a thing of the past and what people can scavenge or loot is guarded at gunpoint. Offering a Baby Ruth bar to another survivor, Willie informs him that candy is now legal tender.

Like refugees from some medieval plague, dazed survivors wander the roads, congregating in tent cities. Those who were caught outside when the blast came are dying slowly from radiation poisoning. Making his way to Lawrence on foot, Dr. Oakes tries to establish order at the overcrowded hospital where medical personnel work by flashlights as mobs of wounded assemble outside.

The Dahlbergs wait in their basement shelter for three weeks until a bell announces that radiation levels have dropped. Farmers meet to discuss the seemingly impossible work of reconstruction. The boundaries of the known world have suddenly shrunk. In a room at the University, a man broadcasts his lonely message from a salvaged short-wave radio: "Hello, is anybody there? This is Lawrence, Kansas. Is anybody there, anybody at all?"

As a printed message at the film's end informs us, the horror of nuclear war was toned down considerably for public consumption. Yet the film realistically refuses to give us easy hope or happy endings. If there is to be a happy ending, as the filmmakers hope, the people of the world must work together today to find a solution so that there never will be "a day after." Though the film proposes no particular answers, ABC has taken an important step in presenting to unprecedented numbers of people a film which breaks through the jargon of megatonnage and survivability to show us the human face of nuclear war.

THE DAY AFTER: SPEAKERS' REFERENCE

We hope this reference will help speakers notice and remember useful details of the film to incorporate into talks and media appearances. When you watch the film on November 20, take notes, jot down important scenes and quotes, and possibly have the show recorded on video equipment. Again these notes assume that speakers are basically familiar with the facts of the nuclear issue.

WHAT IS AT STAKE

Every speaker (and every audience member) has something which comes to mind first when s/he considers what would be destroyed in the event of nuclear war. Some of those things which are shown in the movie are:

- -friends, family, children
- -plans for the future -- all the activities which have meaning only if there is a future -- marriage, education, music lessons, medical checkups, haircuts
- -sports and play (sports arenas, football players, city parks)
- -works of art (in a museum)
- -pets (left outside the fallout shelters)
- -civilization and civilized behavior -- the complicated web that keeps us fed and in communication with each other
- -hope & meaning -- reasons for acting and for upholding humane values; for giving birth or continuing to work as a doctor
- -small human touches -- even the annoyances and dilemmas of daily life seem precious after they are replaced by the overwhelming struggle for survival

THE NATURE OF NUCLEAR WAR

Unimaginable size and scope: Hiroshima was tiny compared to the prospect of all-out nuclear war; unlike at Hiroshima, there would be no "outside world" to offer significant aid.

30-minute wars: The war is over as both sides' missiles leave their silos.

Inescapable: Even small towns of no military significance are not safe. In the film, Minuteman missiles based around Kansas City present multiple targets. Lawrence, though not targeted directly, suffers the effects of fallout, social disintegration, limited supplies and the influx of thousands of desperate refugees. In fact, both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. have so many missiles that every town over 50,000 -- including Lawrence -- is targeted.

No winners: As a military man observes when the missiles are launched, it doesn't matter who first made the decision to launch the attack -- both sides will be destroyed. To survivors trying to cope with the aftermath of nuclear war, the news that there was no surrender or sacrifice of principles is a bleak consolation.

EFFECTS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The film graphically shows many of the major short and long term effects of nuclear weapons. While we do not recommend dwelling on these facts unnecessarily, they can be referred to when necessary. As a note at the film's conclusion states, the effects were toned down somewhat for movie audiences.

The film shows the effects of weapons on people and property both at ground zero and at various distances from the explosion. It shows the effects of blast, heat and radiation as well as firestorms: people vaporized instantly, a young boy blinded by looking at the flash, buildings exploding and collapsing, an entire city burning to ashes, fallout travelling on the wind, the progress of radiation poisoning -- bruises, hair loss, weakness -- taking its toll on initial survivors. It shows the devastation survivors face -- dead animals, barren fields, fallen buildings.

The film also shows the effects of the electromagnetic pulse (EMP) which disables all electrical devices.

INADEQUACY OF MEDICAL RESPONSE

The film explicitly mentions or demonstrates a number of ways in which the medical community's ability to respond after nuclear war would be limited. These include:

- -reduction to 1/4 of usual hospital staff - as film progresses, illness thins the ranks even further
- -burn beds filled within a very short time
- -lack of room to even shelter, let along provide care for those who need it; turning away critical cases
- -same limited supplies of food, water and fuel faced by population at large
- -very limited electricity available
- -limited supply of painkilling and other drugs
- -demands on physicians' time made by continuation of normal medical needs (e.g. childbirth) and by people who are undergoing severe emotional reactions (e.g. hysteria)
- -contamination from unburied decomposing bodies
- -epidemic diseases

LIFE AFTER NUCLEAR WAR

No aspect of survivors' lives is left untouched by nuclear war, and the film indicates that the situation is not likely to improve significantly for a long time.

<u>The Physical Surroundings</u>: There is no electricity, no telephone service or other communication beyond a salvaged short-wave radio which eventually picks up a government broadcast, no plumbing or cars. Many roads and buildings have been reduced to rubble or ashes. There is no shelter for many of the injured, causing them to suffer additional harm from radiation and exposure. There is little uncontaminated food or water, and people use contaminated supplies rather than starve or die of thirst. There is little fuel -- contaminated wood cannot be burned without releasing radiation. Livestock are dead. The soil has been poisoned.

Human Reactions: Everywhere people are dead, ill, or dying, and there is very little that can be done to help them. Those who have something concrete to do -- such as medical personnel -- seem to fare the best, though even they must try not to think too hard about the hope or meaning of their efforts. What has happened is on a scale beyond grasping. People walk or sit in dazed, numb, zombie-like shock, broken by hysterical outbursts. Many do not know what has happened to their loved ones. Those whose friends or families have died are plagued with memories and wonder by what strange chance they have survived.

Social Disintegration: (Speakers should remember that, compared with the physical effects of nuclear weapons, details of the social structure that evolves are theoretical. Nonetheless they are important.)

Like refugees from some medieval plague, people wander the roads looking for food, shelter, medical help and other remains of civilization. Many wait out the hours in makeshift tent cities kept roughly under control by camp patrols. Each camp or surviving enclave is isolated from the others except for bits of news which arrive with people who have been travelling (mostly on foot). The boundaries of the world have shrunk: people do not know if there is a world outside the immediate vicinity, if all the great cities of the world have been leveled to rubble like Kansas City.

Private property has become a thing of the past. What people can scavenge, loot or claim in the way of food, shelter or supplies is guarded at gunpoint. In this new world, candy bars are valuable currency.

Although occasionally some form of governmental assistance arrives (a truckload of food, an advisor or name-taker), it is so inadequate as to be a mockery. There is no significant help or leadership from outside. Generally, people see outsiders, including the government, as coming to take from them what little they have rather than assisting them. There is speculation, later substantiated, that in some places order is being maintained by firing squads.

CIVIL DEFENSE, SURVIVABILITY & RECONSTRUCTION

The film shows many examples of people trying to escape or cope with the devastation of nuclear war, from pre-attack efforts to protect themselves to post-attack attempts at reconstruction.

Pre-attack Preparations: Although one man comments that there is no safe refuge short of the Yukon, many evacuate the city. Grocery stores are filled with panicky people hording food, batteries and other supplies. The highways are crowded with cars. Along the roadside, long lines of people attempting to reach their relatives gather at pay telephones. City streets are jammed by many small accidents as people hastily try to flee or reach home at the last moment. In rural areas, some bring supplies to their basement and cover the windows with dirt; in the city, people congregate in municipal shelters.

The Attack: Many are caught on the road as the bombs explode. Their cars stop, shortcircuited by the electromagnetic pulse (EMP). As buildings collapse and fires sweep the city, shelters prove useless.

Post-Attack: As is noted in the film, those who survive the initial blast are not necessarily the lucky ones. Those who have no shelter are immediately subjected to high radiation levels. Those who are hiding in makeshift shelters (far enough from ground zero to escape the blast or firestorm) have other things to contend with. Sitting in the dark to conserve batteries, losing track of time, not knowing what, if anything, is left above, "going crazy" from the confinement and the stress, deciding whether to turn away others who come seeking shelter. In the film, some of them at least are notified by bells when it is safe to come out. (In fact, there might be no way for people to know when it would be safe to leave shelters.) When they do come out, it is to the devastated world described above.

As survivors try to put things into some kind of working order, they run into a gap between theory and practice -- there has never been an all-out nuclear war. No one has ever had to ascertain the effects of the EMP and figure out what power sources will still work, or tried to restore the poisoned soil for planting with only the most obviously inadequate government guidelines.

Concrete assistance from outside is limited to a truckload of food which provokes a fight when there is not enough to go around. (See also sections on "No Winners" and "Social Disintegration" above.)

REFERENCES TO THEORY AND WEAPONS SYSTEMS

Limited Nuclear War: the film shows a situation escalating rapidly from a European crisis into a full-scale nuclear war. At first, most Americans assume that the United States will not endanger its own citizens by getting fully involved in a European conflict.

Launch-on-warning: At a scene in a barbershop, a customer refers to missiles having been put on "launch-on-warning." and explains that in the event of nuclear war each side must "use or lose" its weapons.

ICBMs: The same speaker makes clear that not only must either country "use or lose" its weapons, but that those weapons (150 Minuteman silos in Missouri) and Titan silos in Wichita are targets endangering civilian areas.

Pershings: In the early stages of the crisis, when the United States protests the buildup of Soviet troops in Europe, the Soviets reply that this was triggered by the deployment of Pershing missiles in Europe.

LACK OF RESPONSE TO THE NUCLEAR THREAT

The film has several examples of the denial which keeps people from responding constructively to the nuclear threat. As the crisis builds, people reassure each other that no one would be crazy enough to start a nuclear war. A man hopes that a nuclear war won't interfere with his plans to attend a symphony. In one case we see that the underside of this denial is

unbearable fear. Even as the missiles are streaking through the sky, a woman compulsively continues making beds until her husband drags her, crying hysterically, down to the basement.

As the missiles leave the ground, people watch, fascinated and helpless -- the time for doing anything is past.

After the war, a pregnant woman with no hope for her child's future, exclaims angrily that people knew all about the nuclear threat for 40 years but didn't do anything, and now it's too late.

FINAL NOTE

Speakers may be presented with the Korean Airlines incident as a reason why arms control is not possible. Possible responses include:

- -That this incident should remind us just how fragile a balance is being maintained and how real is the possibility of overreaction. That anything which cuts decision time further, raises the stakes and makes overreaction more likely, (e.g. Pershing missiles, launch-on-warning) makes us less safe.
- -A reminder that arms control are most necessary not with our friends but with people we don't trust;
- -A comparison of the risks of reaching an agreement with the Soviets with the risks of allowing the arms race to continue;
- -A discussion of means of verifiability, showing that arms control agreements need not be based on trust.

WHAT NOT TO SAY ABOUT THE DAY AFTER

-Do not say that THE DAY AFTER is a "advertising job for the disarmament movement." It isn't. It does not take a stand on the arms issue. ABC has maintained a neutral position which we must honor. We suggest that speakers talk about how ABC is offering the country an opportunity to discuss the danger of nuclear war - a dialogue that all sides can engage in. If the public sees the film as an advertisement for one side or another, they will be polarized even before they see the film - or they may not watch it at all.

-The use of this film by anti-nuclear war groups is a fine use of television. At the end of the film, ABC recommends that the people and leaders of the world find a way to avert nuclear disaster. The dialogue we are encouraging is precisely what ABC is suggesting. In addition, the Viewer's Guide which ABC sent to nearly 500,000 schools and churches specifically suggests holding community meetings, film forums, etc.

THE DAY AFTER GENERAL GOALS AND GUIDELINES FOR SPEAKERS

SPEAKING BEFORE THE FILM AIRS

If you are speaking before November 20, your major goal is **TO GET AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE TO WATCH THE FILM!** There is a potential audience of 60 million people out there. This is an unprecedented opportunity to bring home the facts about nuclear war and generate the concern needed to work for solutions NOW.

Because the issue itself is so frightening, promoting the film must be done thoughtfully in order not to turn people off. Here are some guidelines:

-- Don't dwell on the negative or depressing aspects. A pre-film talk is not the time to discuss the effects of nuclear war -- the film itself will show them.

-- Do convey that this subject is everyone's concern, directly involving our towns, our families, our children. There are so many nuclear weapons now that no part of the country would be left unaffected. The film shows the effects, not on Washington or New York but on a midwestern city, farms and a college town.

-- Portray the film as exciting, showing the relentless buildup of an escalating world crisis which gradually seeps into the awareness of ordinary people who are absorbed in their daily lives -- their jobs, families, boyfriends, etc. There are spectacular special effects.

-- Emphasize the human interest. Emphasize that it is about individuals, not mobs ("We follow the lives of a few families, get to know them"). Describe them in active terms, not as mere passive victims. ("...families whose lives have been changed forever, trying to cope with the aftermath of nuclear war..." rather than "...wounded and dead people lying around everyplace.")

-- Share interesting details about the making of the film, who stars in it, the use of local extras in the cast. (See enclosed materials.)

-- Present the film showing itself as an event which will cause a lot of discussion and controversy: "Never before has a major television network dealt with this subject before." Brandon Stoddard, President of ABC Films, called this film "The most important thing ABC has ever done." The film has been bought for distribution in 30 different countries. Praise ABC for showing such a controversial film on prime-time television.

-- Emphasize that the film is apolitical. Remember, we want everyone to watch it. Assume that everyone -- whether they support a freeze or the MX -- wants to prevent nuclear war. This film, which presents only the unarguable scientific facts, is intended to generate healthy controversy and public discussion about how to prevent it.

-- Encourage people to watch the film in groups: with family, friends, neighbors, or others. There will be thousands of such groups watching all around the country. Convey that this is something important and they can be a part of it.

-- Go easy on membership recruiting if you belong to an organization which advocates a particular position on the nuclear issue. Having people watch the film in groups is groundwork for linking up later to work together on the nuclear issue but the film should not be identified with any particular viewpoint except concern about nuclear war.

-- Most talk shows will allow you to give out a phone number where interested people can get further information. In addition to the number of your local organization(s), there will be a national 800 number available which people can call to receive an informational packet. Use them both whenever possible.

SPEAKING AFTER THE FILM AIRS

If you are speaking after November 20, your major goals are:

1) **TO DEAL WITH PEOPLE'S REACTIONS TO THE FILM, SO THAT THEY COME AWAY CONCERNED, READY TO LEARN MORE AND TO ACT**; and

2) **TO HELP PEOPLE LINK UP WITH OTHERS AND TO MAKE THEM AWARE OF WHAT THEY CAN DO.**

Post-film speakers may be dealing with a wide variety of situations which will influence what they choose to talk about and how. Short articles or taped segments for radio or television are different from call-in radio shows or television shows with studio audiences.

Especially in longer formats, speakers can expect the same kinds of questions that arise in other speaking situations, particularly variations on "What about the Russians?" and "How can ordinary people make a difference?" We are assuming that people speaking with the media after the film have had experience as spokespeople for their own organizations, and it is not our intention here to provide comprehensive answers to such questions. We hope that the following guidelines will be helpful in using the film as a tool and in anticipating some of the situations which may arise in response to it.

-- In short articles and taped interviews it is especially important to know what you want to say and say it concisely. A five-minute taped tv interview may be reduced to 15 seconds when shown. A possible brief statment might include:
  * That the events in the film really could happen: the weapons exist, their effects are known.
  * That the events in the film don't have to happen: nuclear war is not inevitable.
  * That there are things people can do to prevent the film from becoming a "preview of coming attractions."

-- Refer to the film. Use the film's personalization and emotional weight to help you make your points. The Speakers Reference can help you find appropriate references. The limitations of civil defense plans can be illustrated with the scenes of traffic accidents, grocery store panics and overburdened medical facilities. Even an explanation of "launch on warning," can be enlivened by referring to the barbershop scene where it is mentioned.

-- Be personal if it seems appropriate. On live shows, welcome personal responses from your audience. How did you react to the film? Why are you concerned about the nuclear issue? Did members of your audience believe it could happen? If not, why not?

-- Expect a range of emotional responses from studio or call-in audiences. These may include:
  * Denial, perhaps with Anger: "It's not going to happen. They shouldn't try to scare people like that."
  * Depression and Despair: "Even if it's going to happen, I can't do anything about it so why tell me?"
  * Readiness to Act: "What can I do right now?"

-- Don't dwell unnecessarily on the negative. People have just been hit over the head: now is not the time for further descriptions of blast, heat and radiation effects.

-- But be clear that it really could happen. If you are talking with people who are denying the possibility, you can:
  * State that the facts about nuclear weapons -- their numbers and effects -- are known. Emphasize that these facts belong to the realm of physics and physiology, not politics.
  * Mention that, as stated at the film's end, the effects of these weapons were toned down for the tv audience.

-- Be equally clear that it is not inevitable. Let the film play the heavy, while you offer hope. We are not lemmings. We have a choice. People created the nuclear dilemma: many concerned people working together can solve it.

-- Present learning the facts about nuclear war as a positive thing. The film has several examples of people going about their business trying to pretend nothing is happening. That is dangerous: waking up to the situation is the first step towards doing something about it. A woman in the film points out that we knew about nuclear weapons for 40 years but nobody paid attention. Is that what we want to have to say?

-- Acknowledge the validity of people's emotional reactions -- it is a healthy and sane to find the facts about nuclear weapons deeply upsetting. Remember that denial can be a response to unmanageable fear and feelings of powerlessness.

-- Present action as one of the best antidotes for feelings of powerlessness and depression.

-- Have a range of things available for people to do. If possible, have special events planned in the week or two after the film. We hope that there will be a large response to this film: be prepared to follow up. A quick response to people's expressions of interest is the best way to maintain both their concern and the hope that something can be done. It is helpful to have things people can do at different levels of involvement, from obtaining more information before they make up their minds, to helping with small tasks or becoming highly involved. Your organization's telephone number can be shown on the tv screen or given out on the radio, along with a national 800 number.

PREPARING FOR SHORT INTERVIEWS

1. Here are some simple guidelines for preparing for short interviews on both radio and television. These guidelines assume that you are well versed in the principle issues in the arms race debate, especially the effects of nuclear weapons, civil defense, weapons systems, psychological effects, etc. and how this relates to your own town.

2. When you watch the film, **take notes!** Jot down important quotes and scenes you want to remember. Some people may want to video tape the showing so they can quickly refer back to important scenes and quotes

3. If you are scheduled to be on a talk show, be sure and reconfirm all details with your contact person. Do not assume anything. Make sure you understand the format - call-in, debate, live audience, taped news segment, etc.

4. At least a week before your scheduled appearance, send your contact person at the radio/TV station the following: a short biography of yourself, a few background articles on the film, information on your local group, details on any upcoming activites, and a phone number you want given out.

Many talk shows allow local phone numbers to be put on the screen toward the end of the interview. This is very important. Do not assume this will happen automatically. Ask for it and then make sure it is arranged. **Double-check** the number. Also make sure your organization is equipped to handle calls immediately after the show.

Be prepared to follow up within a few days. Don't wait weeks to send information. Strike while the iron is hot. Also we suggest you plan a public event Tuesday or Wednesday evening of that week, right after the film, but before Thanksgiving.

5. If you have some good quotes you like to use, have them with you on cards. Also you might want to jot down the five most important points you want to get across during the interview.

6. <u>News Programs</u> - If you are on a segment during the evening news, give short direct answers to questions. You only have a few minutes. If you are taped, your comments will be edited. Each sentence should stand on its own. No rambling comments or complex arguments. Speak simply and directly. Remember, your viewers will be feeling overwhelmed after seeing the film - speak appropriately and with feeling.

7. <u>Talk Shows</u> - With a talk show format, you may have more time. If the show is longer, then you will be able to explore the arms race issue in greater depth. Still, try to talk in simple sentences. Do not assume your audience understands terms like MIRV, first strike or launch on warning. Explain things simply.

8. Live Audiences - This presents the most powerful format for discussing the issue. If you are on such a program - television or radio - the day after the film airs, you have a great opportunity to deal with people's responses. Acknowledge the audiences fears, questions, feelings of denial, etc. Be personal - share your own experience of seeing the film.

9. Debate - You may find yourself in a debate with a conservative holding the "peace through strength" position. Make sure your group sends the best debater for such a show. Your representative must know the facts well. It is important that he/she does not come off just as emotional and afraid, while the opposition is seen as rational.

10. Devote the last part of your interview to telling people how they can get involved in stopping the arms race. Tell people about the alternative possibilities. Let people know that there are groups and individuals working to find solutions. Give people hope and ways to get involved.

11. Tell them what they can do now to get involved. Talk about your organization or others in your area. Tell them of planned events that are simple to remember. For example - "Tomorrow night at 7:30, there will be a meeting at St. John's Church for concerned parents." It must be easy for people to reach your group or attend meetings.

12. If you want to prepare for the interview, write out a dozen sample questions that might be asked and practice responding, either in writing or verbally. Talk them over with other speakers from your group. Use previously prepared speakers' packets for hints and guidelines. With only an hour of work, you could be well prepared.

13. THE DAY AFTER will bring out many negative reactions. Be prepared for tough questions or antagonism. Some viewers will be furious with ABC and your group. Practice responding to tough questions.

THE DAY AFTER: LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

THE DAY AFTER is an ABC film. ABC owns the copyright. Therefore it is very important when planning activities around the airing of the film, or when speaking about THE DAY AFTER, that you are very careful not to violate ABC's rights. Here are some simple guidelines to follow.

1. Before the film airs (prior to November 20), in written materials, do not quote directly from the film. It is fine to paraphrase, but no direct quotations. Do not give away the entire story line. Describe the plot only in generalities.

2. If you are having an event - a group viewing, community meeting, etc, and it is clearly connected with the airing of the film, it is essential that you print a disclaimer on your promotional material. It must not appear that you are part of ABC's publicity campaign. There must be no confusion. The following statement is a sample disclaimer -

"The Day After Forum is a special project of Citizens for Peace. It is not connected with ABC or the production or distribution of THE DAY AFTER."

3. If you are appearing on television talk shows or being interviewed on the radio, it would be prudent to briefly mention that you are not connected with ABC. Mention your group affiliation.

4. If you are appearing on television talks shows after the film airs (November 20), feel free to quote from the film or talk in detail about any aspect of THE DAY AFTER.

THE DAY AFTER: HOW THE RADICAL RIGHT WILL VIEW THIS FILM

The radical right is already preparing to attack the film and ABC. Here is a summary of the kind of arguments we can expect.

-The film undermines American morale, creating a defeatist attitude, thus playing into the hands of the Soviets. Since the film will not be shown in the Soviet Union, it will have a one sided effect on the public.

-Films like this play on the emotions in a democratic country and will undermine the willingness of Americans to support a strong nuclear deterent. American weakness can bring on a nuclear war.

-As usual, the antinuclear movement is playing on people's emotions but doesn't have any workable alternatives. All they do is get people upset.

-The film shows no winners. It implies that deterence does not work. It even implies that America may have struck first.

-The film portrays a worse situation than it will actually be. Civil Defense does not work. It shows that there is no orderly evacuation.

-The film creates the attitude that nuclear war is worse than being communist - "Better red than dead".

-The film denigrates the United States of America, the President, organized religion, the emergency authorities.

-The film encourages fear and panic and makes rational discourse about our defense needs impossible.

-The film shows that America would not recover from a nuclear attack.

-The film fails to show that much of the country would survive and that although the loss would be high, it would be acceptable.

-The film is made by "liberals and leftists" according to syndicated columnist William Rusher - communist sympathizers. "Why is ABC doing Yuri Andropov's job?" asks the New York Post.

-The film is set to air just weeks before deployment of Pershing missiles in Europe. The film has been deliberately timed to weaken NATO.

-The film terrifies children. ABC is deliberately trying to give the children of America nightmares.

BE PREPARED FOR THESE ARGUMENTS WITH DIRECT ANSWERS

THE DAY AFTER: WHERE THE RADICAL RIGHT MAY ATTACK

We should be prepared for the radical right to attack the film, ABC, the local affiliates, and the disarmament movement. We need to be ready to deal with them as they come. Here are some possible lines of attack they might use.

-They will directly attack the ABC network for making and airing the film. They will attack the top executives at ABC, calling them leftists, communist sympathizers, etc.

-They will attack the show's sponsors, if they can find out which corporations have bought time. There will only be a few sponsors. They may organize boycotts or attacks on these companies.

-They may attack the local affiliates for airing the film. Local ABC stations are not owned by the network and therefore do not have to show THE DAY AFTER. Some affiliates may cave in under pressure. Local right wing groups may heavily pressure the local station executives, many of whom are undoubtedly conservative. They may also attack any local advertisers.

-They will undoubtedly demand equal time both from the network and from affiliates to air their point of view. They will ask to be on local talk shows and news programs after the film airs. In many cases, they will be given some time.

-There may be statements from the White House, Department of Defense, the Pentagon, the Department of State, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), right wing congressmen and senators - all attacking the film.

-There will be numerous right wing columnists attacking the film and ABC.

-They may also try to minimize the effect of the film in any way possible.

-They may try to organize many right wing groups to picket ABC affiliates, hold rallies, conduct letter writing campaigns, etc.

-They may attack any use of the film in schools, saying the film terrifies children.

The radical right may also argue that the film proves that America needs 1) a comprehensive civil defense program, 2) defensive space satelites, 3) Pershing and Cruise missile deployment, 4) MX and other new missiles, 5) larger defense budget. They will continue with the standard argument that the only way to prevent nuclear war is by building bigger and better missiles.

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL ABC AFFILIATES AND ADVERTISERS

THE DAY AFTER: USEFUL QUOTES FOR SPEAKERS

"I can't believe that this world can go beyond our generation and on down to succeeding generations with this kind of weapon (nuclear missiles) on both sides, poised at each other, without someday, some fool, or some maniac, or some accident triggering the kind of war that is the end of the line for all of us."

Ronald Reagan (May, 1983)

"If deterence fails and conflict develops, the present NATO strategy carries with it a high risk that Western Civilization, as we know it, will be destroyed."

Robert McNamara (Fall,1983)

"There is no more important issue than the avoidance of nuclear war. Whatever your interests, passions, or goals, they and you are threatened fundamentally by the prospect of nuclear war. We have achieved the capability for the certain destruction of our civilization and perhaps our species as well. I find it incredible that any thinking person would not be concerned in the deepest way about this issue."

Carl Sagan

"We must never relax our efforts to arouse in the people of the world, and especially in their governments, an awareness of the unprecedented disaster which they are absolutely certain to bring on themselves unless there is a fundamental change in their attitudes toward one another as well as in their concept of the future. The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything except our way of thinking."

Albert Einstein

"When it comes to strategic thermonuclear war, I don't think there is such a thing as No. 1 or No. 2. In exchanging nuclear weapons, the damage to both participants would be so great that there is no winner, and therefore no such thing as No. 1 and No. 2."

Harold Brown, 1978

"The way to win a atomic war is to make certain it never starts."

General Omar Bradley

"We have gone on piling weapon upon weapon, missile upon missile, new levels of destructiveness upon old ones, helplessly, almost involuntarily, like victims of some sort of hypnotism, like men in a dream, like lemmings headed for the sea."

George F. Kennan

"It is time to examine our attitude toward peace itself. Too many of us think it is impossible. But that is a dangerous, defeatist belief. It leads to the conclusion that war is inevitable - that mankind is doomed - that we are gripped by forces we cannot control."

John F. Kennedy

THE DAY AFTER: FACT AND FICTION

Most people who see THE DAY AFTER will be overwhelmed by the scenes of death and devastation. Don't hit them over the head with details that will only numb them further. However, these details can help you if someone raises the argument that "it wouldn't be so bad." It would be immeasurable worse. See the article on the new Livermore study (enclosed).

THE DAY AFTER graphically portrays the effects of nuclear weapons on the heartland of America. However, it is wildly optimistic: in reality, it would be far worse than depicted. At the end of the film, ABC admits that the effects would be much worse, but they obviously felt that the public could only take so much devastation.

It is important that all speakers be well informed on the real effects of nuclear weapons. Some ill-informed people may suggest that the film exaggerates what a nuclear war would be like in order, to scare people. Let the facts speak for themselves. Remember, the effects of nuclear weapons are a matter of physics, not politics.

-Kansas City - the film depicts a two weapon attack air burst over Kansas City. We may presume each weapon is one megaton. The film essentially shows the city entirely destroyed. This is accurate. From such an attack, everyone in a 125 square mile area would be killed outright - 250,000 instant fatalities and 500,000 seriously burned victims with little or no hope of medical aid.

-Lawrence - In THE DAY AFTER, Lawrence is not directly nuclear attacked. However, because both the United States and the Soviet Union have so many nuclear weapons, Lawrence is very likely targeted, having a population over 50,000 and a university. According to FEMA, Lawrence is a high risk area. If Lawrence is directly attacked, there would be no survivors and no "day after".

-In a full scale nuclear exchange, we could expect the following attack on Missouri and Kansas: Each of the 150 Minuteman missile silos at the Whiteman Airforce Base near Kansas City, would be targetted by at least two warheads set to ground burst, creating an enormous amount of fallout. There are also Titan missile silos near Wichita, Kansas. In addition, FEMA has estimated that at almost 40 communities in both states would be subject to direct Soviet attack.

-THE DAY AFTER shows people living in basements for three weeks, then coming out when the radiation count reaches 0.5 rads per hour. This is a good estimate. However, even if they do come out in this environment, within six months they would receive a lethal dose of 460 rads. The film depicts people living in above ground shelters in university buildings. Since this would offer

NOTES ON THE FILM: NOT FOR GENERAL RELEASE

WHAT IS AT STAKE

"hope and meaning" - several times Dr. Oakes mentions that his basic belief that people's better nature will not let them destroy themselves gives meaning to his work. At the hospital he says, "If human stupidity triumphs, we wouldn't be mending people's hearts: we'd be back in caves eating them. Why bother to do anything?"

Later, after the war, his own faith is shaken when the pregnant woman asks him for a good reason to bring her child into the world.

THE NATURE OF NUCLEAR WAR

"Unimaginable size and scope" - At the hospital, after hearing that Moscow is being evacuated and that Kansas City may be evacuated, a doctor says to Dr. Oakes: "Where do you go? The Yukon? Hiroshima was peanuts compared to this."

"30-minute wars" - At the missile silo, servicemen want to flee as soon as the missiles are launched. When their commanding officer attempts to restrain them, one says, "The war is over -- we've done our job." Someone in Lawrence, watching the missiles take off, notes that it will take 30 minutes for the missiles to reach the Soviet Union -- and the same for theirs to reach the U.S.

"Inescapable" - In a barbershop, one customer asks, "What's the chance that something will happen here in the middle of nowhere?" "There's no nowhere anymore," another customer explains. "There are 150 Minuteman silos in Missouri. That's an awful lot of bullseyes."

"No winners" - As the missiles leave the base, men say, "Can you believe they did it." "We're gonna get it either way."

After the war, survivors in Lawrence receive a message from the President which we hear interspersed with scenes of fires, bread lines and other devastation. In essence the speech says that the U.S. has reached a cease fire with the Soviet Union and "During this hour of sorrow, I wish to assure you that America has survived this terrible tribulation. There has been no surrender, no retreat from principles of liberty and democracy. The free world looks to us for leadership. We are prepared to make every effort for relief and reconstruction. We are counting on you."

LIFE AFTER NUCLEAR WAR

One of the most noticeable things is the sheer overwhelming numbers of people needing assistance. At one of the tent cities Willie tells a man who is taking names, "I can't keep nothin' in, not even my own hair." The man doesn't even look up. "I know it's radiation sickness," Willie says. "Is there anything we can do about it?" The man just looks at him without saying anything.

"Social Disintegration" -

At the hospital, Dr. Oakes says, "I wonder who was spared -- if New York, Paris, Moscow, are just like Kansas City now."

Walking along the road, Willie asks two dazed travellers about neighboring towns. One replies, "There ain't no Sedalia, ain't no Green Ridge, ain't no [Windsor], no nothin'."

From a room at the University in Lawrence, a man sends out a lonely call on a short-wave radio, "Hello, is anybody there? This is Lawrence, Kansas. Is anybody there, anybody at all?"

As Willie picks up candy bars in a deserted store, gunshots are heard in the streets outside. Jim Dahlberg keeps people away from his family's fallout shelter with a shotgun and is later killed by squatters on what used to be his property. Everywhere, people guard what they have at gunpoint.

Offering a Baby Ruth bar to another survivor, Willie tells him, "This is legal tender now."

CIVIL DEFENSE, SURVIVABILITY AND RECONSTRUCTION

"Post-Attack" - At the hospital, staff try to get some electricity working and make surmises about what power sources may be unaffected by the EMP. Someone says, "It's all theoretical. It's never happened before."

In the Dahlberg basement, Eva Dahlberg says, "We're lucky to be alive." Jim says, "We'll see how lucky that is."

A group of farmers gather around a man who is telling them what to do to prepare the poisoned soil for a new crop. He advises them to burn out the current crop, decontaminate, plough under and scrape off the top 4-5" of topsoil. The farmers react with disbelief, "What do you mean scrape off the top 4-5"?" "What do you do with the dirt?" "Where'd you get all this information, all this good advice - some government pamphlet?" They say that the government will come and take things away from them.

It is clear that reconstruction, if possible at all, will not occur for a long time. The pregnant woman asks Dr. Oakes, "You think we're going to sweep up the dead, fill in a couple of holes and build some super markets?"

REFERENCES TO THEORY AND WEAPONS SYSTEMS

"Limited Nuclear War" - Several times people express disbelief that a war in Europe will spread to the U.S., in spite of the U.S.'s NATO commitment. "We're not gonna nuke the Russians to save the Germans." At the barbershop the customers say, "No one wants to be the first to use [nuclear weapons]." "The fallout will spread - they won't use just one bomb." "Maybe they'll contain it."

LACK OF RESPONSE TO THE NUCLEAR THREAT

When the man in the barbershop says, "Maybe they'll contain it," another replies, "I hope so. I've got symphony tickets for tonight."

People try to reassure themselves that it will never happen. Lying in bed, Dr. Oakes and his wife recall the Cuban Missile Crisis. "We went to the window and looked for bombs." "It didn't happen then, and it won't happen now. People are crazy

but not that crazy."

As Jim Dahlberg prepares the basement for use as a fallout shelter, his wife continues with her wedding preparations. "They're just going to have to go on without me," she says. "I've got 67 mouths to feed tomorrow." "I hope so," he replies. Later, as the missiles speed into the sky, she continues compulsively making beds and refuses to go downstairs. When he grabs her and pulls her along, she becomes hysterical.

The pregnant woman says to Dr. Oakes, "You think we're going to sweep up the dead, fill in a couple of holes and build some supermarkets? We knew the score. We knew all about bombs. We knew all about fallout. We knew this could happen for 40 years. But nobody was interested."

No patience for reassurance and making no kind of political peace: in *The Day After*, survivors of a nuclear attack on the U.S. await aid

ABC

Video

The Nightmare Comes Home

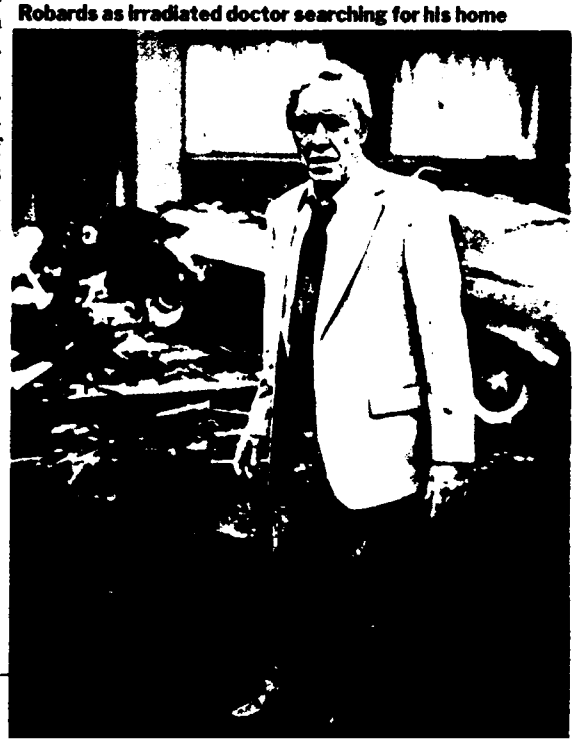
ABC's movie The Day After *stirs a storm of nuclear debate*

Peanuts. Or so says a desperate, despairing physician in *The Day After*. Even Hiroshima was peanuts compared with the irrevocable thermonuclear slaughter visited on Kansas City and its environs. Lawrence. Sedalia. Green Ridge. They have all been devastated. But this is not some horrible, local nuclear accident. This is worldwide atomic warfare. The missiles have been launched. the bombs have gone off. The global village has been nuked.

No escape, no hope. And no happy endings either. Only the suggestion of a blighted tomorrow, full of radiation poisoning that desiccates survivors and deforms unborn children. Say this for *The Day After:* it has no patience for reassurance and makes no kind of political peace. It sets itself a relatively easy mark—to illustrate the ravages of nuclear war—but a punishingly high goal. It may be that no television film has ever had such ambition, or presumption, and just so no one misses the point, the network and the film makers spell it out in grave white letters just before the final fade: "It is hoped that the images of this film will inspire the nations of this earth, their people and leaders, to find the means to avert the fateful day."

The Day After will not be broadcast until Nov. 20, but its political implications have already been discussed, denounced and championed by proponents and opponents of the nuclear freeze. ABC executives are united and adamant about the apolitical nature of their 2-hr. 5-min. presentation. "We never intended the film to be a political statement," claims Brandon Stoddard, president of ABC Motion Pictures and the initiator of the project. "The movie simply says that nuclear war is horrible. That is all it says. That is a very safe statement." Adds the film's director, Nicholas Meyer: *"The Day After* does not advocate disarmament, build-down, buildup, freeze. I didn't want to alienate any viewers. The movie is like a giant public service announcement, like Smokey the Bear."

Robards as irradiated doctor searching for his home



The movie has already started its fair share of brush fires. Tape copies leaked into circulation and were being screened for freeze sympathizers as long ago as July. Congressman Edward Markey, co-sponsor of a House freeze resolution, caught an early show and says, "It's the most important television program ever because it's the most important issue ever. It's the most honest account of nuclear war that has been done." "It's an awesome film," adds Congressman Thomas J. Downey. For Janet Michaud, executive director of the Campaign Against Nuclear War, "ABC is performing an enormous public service. It's giving the American people the ability to become part of the debate over the most important issue of our times." For Roger Molander, founder of the nuclear-war-education group Ground Zero, *The Day After* is a conduit to confrontation. "To come to grips with the reality of nuclear war, one has to go through a nuclear passage, to confront a nuclear war in all its horror. This will provide a passage for 30, 40, 50 million Americans."

Television networks, which like

to hear numbers like that, nevertheless give a collective corporate shudder at the slightest hint of advocacy. "ABC's responsibility is to the film itself," says Stoddard. "How it is perceived or used by other people is beyond our control." That may be, but the freeze supporters have made a strong head start. Leaked copies of *The Day After* are being shown at antinuke fund raisers, while the opposition has been effectively shut out. "This film has been used to generate interest and support, including financial support, for our efforts," Michaud admits.

Paul Dietrich, president of the conservative National Center for Legislative Research, wangled himself an invitation to a private showing and calls the film "anything but nonpartisan." Says John Fisher, president of the American Security Council: "Clearly someone associated with the production has a significantly different perspective than we do, because somehow the pirated version hasn't been exposed to people on our side of the issue. This movie says deterrence has failed, and that's a political statement."

A family surveys the wasteland that once was their farm

Having made the film their own, freeze advocates are now using it, in the words of Disarmament Activist Josh Baran, "to educate people. It is the best use of television I can think of." Last April, Baran helped start an *ad hoc* organization called The Day Before, which will work with 17 national antinuclear groups to set up seminars in more than 100 cities around the country for two days following the film's air date. Ground Zero will mail out 100,000 viewing guides. The Center for Defense Information is considering producing a 60-sec. commercial, narrated by Paul Newman, offering "a nuclear war-prevention kit." "I plan to send in for one of those kits," writes Conservative Columnist William F. Buckley Jr., "and if Mr. Newman doesn't send me an MX missile, I'm going to report him to the Postal Service people for fraud."

All this heat and dust have made advertisers, already shy of buying time on such a dubiously commercial program as *The Day After*, almost paralyzed with reluctance. By some accounts, the network has lined up four or five sponsors; by others, it has sold only half the 25 available 30-sec. commercial spots. "I couldn't confirm half, but I know it's a good portion," comments Jeff Tolvin, ABC's director of business information, with gingerly care. The network is charging a hefty $135,000 a spot—a price that could dip as show time approaches and empty air time looms—but the problem, according to Madison Avenue, is not monetary. "It may be one of the most devastating pieces of film I've ever seen, TV or otherwise, but it is artistically unsuitable to most of our clients," says Joel Segal, senior vice president of broadcasting for Ted Bates Advertising. "It isn't the issue of controversy; it's more a matter of the commercials' conflicting grossly with the content of the program." Asks another agency executive: "Do you want singing and dancing and music in that kind of program environment?"

The scenario is not too elaborate or cynical for the byzantine world of show biz: sponsor recalcitrance triggers stress. Tapes are leaked, positions taken, battle lines drawn, articles written. No movie since CBS's 1980 Holocaust film *Playing for Time* has stirred such a dust devil of ideological p.r., but the stakes are even larger here. *The Day After* cost an opulent $7 million, and its promotion budget may ultimately equal that figure. ABC, gambling that it will make up in ratings what it misses in ad dollars, schedules the film for sweeps week, when the three networks all go for broke in the ratings. The timing is perfect: Nov. 20 is not only a Nielsen trifecta, it is less than two weeks before the Pershing IIs are due to be installed in West Germany. More controversy, more publicity. Is the timing a reflection of political intent as well as business expediency? The network firmly denies it. *The National Review* editorializes that ABC is making "a $7 million contribution to the faltering campaign against the deployment of the Pershing II." So *The Day After* lumbers in carting more weight than Mother Courage.

Atom memoir

For all this, the film's beginnings were astonishingly humble: Brandon Stoddard saw *The China Syndrome* and wondered what the home-front consequences of nuclear war would be. When Nicholas Meyer met Jason Robards on an airplane and offered him the lead role of a humanistic surgeon, Robards accepted with elegant simplicity. "It beats signing petitions," he said. Now that *The Day After* has been temporarily positioned right at the center of the nuclear debate, there is no more room for humility or modesty. The finished film was premiered last week in Lawrence, Kans., where much of it had been made on location, and the townspeople were tearful and shaken. Stoddard reports he wept when he saw the first cut of the film and says the present version "is the most important thing I have ever done." Director Meyer calls the movie "the most valuable thing I've ever done with my life." Mayor David Longhurst has invited Ronald Reagan and Yuri Andropov to Lawrence for a summit. Another Lawrence citizen, Bob Swan, member of the antinuke Let Lawrence Live organization, says he is

After the holocaust, the faithful forgather to start picking up the spiritual pieces

"Do you want singing and dancing and music in that kind of program environment?"

Antinuke activists in Lawrence, Kans., put their feelings where their banners are

trying to link up his home town by television or telephone to Leningrad, so that Soviets and Americans can hash things out person to person. After the broadcast, ABC will put on a special 45-min. edition of *Viewpoint*, anchored by Ted Koppel. The show, intended as both a kind of emotional decompression chamber for viewers and a debating platform between friends and foes of the freeze, has an additional, and certainly not accidental, function. It gives *The Day After* the weight of a major news event.

Nothing, however, can give it the substance. Under all the furor, spontaneous or manufactured, and the high urgency, real or prefabricated just for the premiere, is the film, a frail vessel indeed to bear the fate of mankind. History and distance have not made Stanley Kubrick's 1964 film *Dr. Strangelove* any less great or—sadly—less relevant, but even a movie as fine as that would have to struggle to stay above the sort of ideological tide surging around *The Day After*. No one has yet made the case that *Dr. Strangelove* has been bested, although there are suggestions, even from Meyer, that it has been beaten out in the high earnestness sweepstakes. Meyer concedes his movie "has a minimum of imagination" but thinks *Dr. Strangelove* is "distilled through comedy," which presumably means that his own enterprise, being so conspicuously short of humor, serves some loftier social purpose. This type of cultural con is a piece of undiluted show-biz self-protection, and a good thing too. Political immediacy is just about all *The Day After* has going for it. By any standards other than social, it is a terrible movie.

The film is so aimlessly anecdotal in its opening positions that there is little dramatic connection between the characters. Reality is so quickly and cursorily observed that there seems nothing else to do but bring on the bombs. There are no people here, only targets, stick figures on a Midwestern landscape waiting to be wasted. A kind of predictable character collage revolving erratically around the travails of Robards' nicely realized surgeon, the movie misses dramatic force because it has no center. It does, however, have a centerpiece, a 4-min. sequence representing the atomization of Middle America and, by extension, much of the rest of the world.

People turn where they stand into living X rays just before they disintegrate entirely. Fire storms swallow up towns. The images of destruction, mild for a theatrical movie and practically gentle by any factual measure, are still startling by American television standards, and they pack force. Once this montage of immediate death ends, however, *The Day After* has to get back to its characters, which is to say that it must run on empty. Nuclear annihilation may be the subject, but the film appears to have been the victim of an editorial chain-saw massacre. Whatever the executive reasons for reducing its three-hour running time to just over two may have been, considerations of dramatic coherence cannot have numbered high among them. The female lead (Jobeth Williams) dies off-screen, her passing noted in just a line or two of dialogue. Another major character, a farmer and family man (John Cullum), gets shot by squatters, and his widowed wife and orphaned children react only by turning toward the sound of the gun. Characters tumble in and out like cards in a dropped deck.

Watching the film's premiere in Lawrence

"Like a giant public service announcement."

Paradoxically, when the film is vaguest it is often at its strongest. Impending nuclear war is announced in a series of bulletins on radio and television, casually broadcast and half-heard at first. The sound track carries snatches of references that accelerate to slightly longer descriptions of airport blockades and MiG-25s "invading West German airspace" and that end, finally, with a shocked anchorwoman saying, "Three nuclear weapons in the low-kiloton range were airburst this morning over advancing Soviet troops." There is only calamity after that. ABC's determination to keep up appearances of political evenhandedness have helped the film makers conjure up what seems like a spookily accurate scenario for Armageddon: the beginnings of worldwide disaster as a series of barely overheard fragments. This is global tragedy with no fixed responsibility.

Screenwriter Edward Hume and the film makers were correct in choosing to avoid blaming either the U.S. or the U.S.S.R. for the initiation of catastrophe. This moral neutrality may be one reason the network is actually going to broadcast their film, advertisers or not, champions or not, critics or not. Less than 20 years ago, the BBC refused to show Peter Watkins' very similar but far more devastating *The War Game* because it was "too horrifying." *The Day After*, nowhere near as strong or as skillful, is still frightening enough, and here it is, occupying more than two hours of prime commercial network time. But such a signal of cultural change can also be an intimation of trouble. The generally shabby quality of *The Day After* is of major concern because, rather than startling audiences into a new awareness, it is just as likely to anesthetize them with mediocrity.

This process will not stop with *The Day After*. Paramount already has a movie in the pipeline called *Testament*, about one family trying to survive a nuclear blast. One of the hottest commercial novels due next spring is *Warday* by Whitley Strieber and James Kunetka, which shows America reeling from atomic desolation and California, intact and safe, effectively closed to the rest of the country. "There's a hell of a percentage increase in these day-after-nuclear scripts," says Michael Fuchs, president of Home Box Office's entertainment group. Apocalypse has clearly become something more than the fate that looms just over the horizon line. It may be the growth industry of the '80s. ***—By Jay Cocks. Reported by Peter Ainslie/New York and Denise Worrell/Los Angeles***

Fallout Over 'The Day After'

ABC Motion Pictures president Brandon Stoddard modestly calls it "the most important movie we or anyone else have ever made." Note that he carefully eschews using the word controversy, though there's plenty of it in the air. Janet Michaud, executive director of the Campaign Against Nuclear War, lauds the film for "bringing what is the most critical issue of our times right into America's living rooms." From the other end of the ideological spectrum, National Review publisher William A. Rusher accuses the movie of helping to inspire "an ignorant public hysteria." That's only a small sampling of the hyperbole and emotion being generated by ABC's "The Day After," the most visually horrific—and politically explosive—two hours of drama ever to ignite the home screen.

Scheduled for broadcast on Nov. 20, "The Day After" takes as its premise the ultimate what-if. A vaguely defined incident on the East-West German border mushrooms into an exchange of nuclear missiles. From that point on, director Nicholas Meyer deposits us inside an American heartland's nuclear hell. He presents an unrelievedly graphic depiction of the obliteration of Kansas City and the agonies of survivors in the nearby community of Lawrence. We see virtually an entire populace reduced to vaporized silhouettes. We see blistered and blinded human gargoyles suffer slow death from radiation sickness. We see the crumbling of a society's restraints: the most law-abiding citizens emerge from the rubble of ground zero to loot, rape and pillage. As firing squads add to the mass graves, a few valiant survivors (notably a heart surgeon played by Jason Robards) struggle to reconnect the severed communal bonds that distinguish life from mere existence. But their efforts erode as relentlessly as the deathly white ash that wafts down upon the blackened fields. "Hello, is anybody there?" calls out the city's last CB operator. "This is Lawrence, Kansas . . . Is anybody there at all?"

Cause: Though ABC insists that the movie's only message is the horror of nuclear holocaust, "The Day After" has produced an unprecedented degree of political fallout. Hundreds of antinuclear groups, many of whom prescreened the film by acquiring bootleg copies, have seized on it to advance their cause. They intend to mark the telecast with an array of teach-ins, town-hall meetings, press conferences and candlelight vigils. "Our goal is not that people simply see the film," says Josh Baran, national media coordinator for such disarmament events. "We want to inspire public dialogue. What's most important is what happens the day after 'The Day After'."

Advocates of a strong nuclear defense are mounting offensives of their own, including demonstrations outside the offices of ABC affiliate stations. What particularly upsets the antidisarmament forces is the fact that the film will air just a few weeks before the scheduled installation of American Pershing II missiles in Western Europe. Any nuclear protest generated by the show, they charge, will only aid the Soviet Union's campaign against the missile deployment. The intensity of the right wing's anger was most pungently compressed in an editorial headline in the New York Post: WHY IS ABC DOING YURI ANDROPOV'S JOB?

Predictably, the gruesome nature of this TV production is scaring off potential sponsors. Even though ABC offered to put most of the commercial spots on before the bombs drop, only a handful of advertisers have so far signed up. Some of the network's executives profess surprise over all the furor. "The Day After," they maintain, carries no political statements and never makes clear what originally triggered the nuclear button-pushing. But in fact, one scene has a Soviet official explaining that it was "the coordinated movement of the Pershing II launchers" that provoked his side to take action. Nor is ABC's motivation for presenting the film quite as commendably public-spirited as it would have us believe. It hardly seems a coincidence that the drama will air in November, one of those crucial "sweeps months" during which audience ratings determine future advertising rates.

A preview of what America might make of "The Day After" took place last week in, fittingly, the city of Lawrence. Hundreds of local residents who served as extras in the film packed a University of Kansas auditorium for special screenings. "They came away looking like mourners filing out of a mortuary," reported one journalist. Yet while the celluloid sight of their hometown's devastation left them deeply shaken, it also illuminated their own divisions over the nuclear-arms conundrum. "I think it's one of the most courageous pieces of filmmaking that I have ever seen," marveled Charles Berg, a professor who played a farmer in the movie. College senior Jerald Keating, however, was moved to a sardonic reproach: "I commend ABC in its successful effort to promote hysteria."

Mike Maple—ABC

The devastation of Lawrence on screen, viewers respond: A holocaust in the heartland

That seems a cheap shot. No matter where one stands, it would be difficult not to recognize the educational value of this extraordinary piece of television. At the very least, "The Day After" removes the unimaginable from the abstract and makes it shatteringly real: this is what a nuclear Armageddon is going to look like. Perhaps the movie's most chilling image is that of three Soviet-bound ICBM's silently arcing across the Kansas sky while, in the foreground, spectators in a football stadium obliviously focus on the field. How easy it is to imagine the same three plumes curving in the opposite direction above some tranquil Ukrainian farm. If there is one regret all can subscribe to, it's that "The Day After" will never appear on another national network—the one called Moscow Television.

HARRY F. WATERS with NANCY STADTMAN in New York and CHUCK TWARDY in Lawrence, Kans.

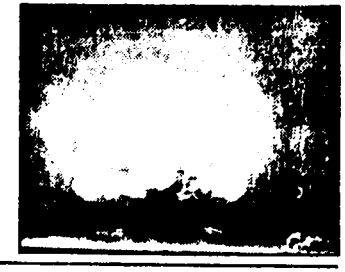
The Washington Post STYLE

Tuesday, October 11, 1983

The Arts/Television/Comics C1

'The Day After' Approaches

ABC's Movie On Nuclear War Runs Into Early Fallout



Antonie Becker looks on in terror and disbelief as nuclear missiles streak toward the Kansas countryside in ABC's "The Day After."

By Tom Shales

THERE ARE WEEKS to go until "The Day After," but already the ABC movie about nuclear war is proving explosive. It could well become the most politicized entertainment program ever seen on network television, a fact that has jitters spreading like a virus through ABC executive suites.

The film depicts in agonized, explicit—and, ABC spokesmen point out, heavily researched—detail the effects a nuclear attack would have on Kansas City and surrounding towns. Those closest to the two nuclear bombs that hit the city itself are vaporized or burned alive by the firestorm on screen (one woman looks down to see her legs engulfed in flames that quickly consume the rest of her); those in outlying cities like Lawrence, Kan., where much of the movie takes place and was filmed, suffer the ravages of radiation sickness from nuclear fallout.

Immediately or gradually, virtually everybody in the movie either dies or clearly is going to die. It is nearly impossible to imagine anyone coming away from this crushingly powerful film unstunned.

What remains to be seen is whether this will be a consciousness-raising experience for the viewing nation or a consciousness-battering one. ABC's nervousness is inspired not so much by the film itself as by the ways pro- and anti-disarmament groups will attempt to use it for their own ends, especially on the pro-disarmament side. Josh Baran, national media coordinator for a project called Target Kansas City/Let Lawrence Live, says from his Berkeley, Calif., headquarters that candlelight vigils and marches will be held in Kansas City and Lawrence the night of the telecast, Nov. 20, to help make the film the centerpiece of a renewed anti-nuke drive.

Baran says there will also be "tens of thousands of group viewings" of

the film that night sponsored by anti-nuclear organizations; an ABC spokesman estimates there are 900 anti-nuclear groups hoping to use the film as support for their cause. Meanwhile, claims Baran, "the radical right is mounting a major offensive against the movie," labeling it left-wing propaganda designed to discredit President Reagan's crusade for heavy defense spending and to "undermine our nation's security."

The film will air not long before the first Pershing II missiles are deployed in West Germany and about the time widespread demonstrations against the missiles are expected to be organized in Europe. "The Day After" may find itself at the center of a furor unlike anything commercial television has seen since CBS broadcast, with great reluctance and after much delay, the anti-Vietnam war play "Sticks and Bones," by David Rabe, in 1973.

The fact that the telecast is engendering this kind of tumult already could itself be seen as a sign that the mind-set of the country is shifting back to a '50s Cold War mentality, a drift accelerated by the Soviet attack on a South Korean commercial airliner last month and by the Reagan administration's perceived preference for swords over plowshares. Suddenly the Soviet Union is "evil" again, and Johnny Carson feels the times are right for jokes about the Russians along the lines of his previous jokes about Iranians. He recently joked that an airport metal detector was set off by "Yuri Andropov's heart."

William F. Buckley's National Review chose to view the telecast of "The Day After" with worldly sarcasm, in an unsigned piece headlined "ABC-TV Backs Deterrence" -that concluded, "The producers at ABC obviously want to impress upon us just what might happen if our deterrent becomes unconvincing, tempting the Soviets to treat Lawrence, Kan., as if it were a Korean airplane. Three cheers for ABC-TV."

Nicholas Meyer, the director of the film (and of such theatrical films as "Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan"), says from Los Angeles that he is unhappy about the advance uproar over his film. "I deplore it on both sides, because the people talking about the film haven't seen it," he says. "However well-intentioned the various factions may be, they're trying to affect the credibility of the film, yea or nay, in the minds of those we expect just to watch it. They're trying to make up the minds of viewers beforehand."

ABC has not yet officially screened the film for the press because the network wants its affiliates to be able to see it first. The "world premiere" showing of "The Day After" takes place tomorrow in Lawrence, where about 3,000 locals who served as extras in the production will have the bizarre experience of watching as their town is destroyed and they suffer and die.

In fact, though, there have been an uncountable number of unofficial screenings of the film not sanctioned by ABC. There appear to be more bootleg copies of "The Day After" than of "E.T.," but apparently only the pro-freeze or pro-disarmament troops have seen them, a fact that angers sources on the other side. One says that, if necessary, "I'll go to Lawrence, Kansas, to see the son of a bitch."

And John M. Fisher, president of the American Security Council, a group that advocates "peace through strength," said yesterday he will ask ABC today if he or a member of his group could have "a pass" to the showing in Lawrence, since ABC had promised him a screening of the film.

Fisher also said that ABC public relations executives requested a meeting with him early in September, because they felt, says Fisher, "that the nuclear freezers were co-opting this film as their own." Fisher says the ABC executives insisted the film was not a political statement but that he told them, "You have said with this film that deterrence failed. It's worked a long time, but you have said it's failed, and that's a political statement." While innumerable pro-freeze and pro-disarmament groups have seen the film, Fisher says, to his knowledge no one in any of the 150 organizations that make up the Coalition for Peace Through Strength has been able to see it, officially or unofficially.

On the pro-freeze side, Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.) says he saw the film six weeks ago but adds, "I can't tell you *how* I saw it." Markey, cosponsor with Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) of a 1982 nuclear freeze resolution, calls the film "a great movie," says "public opinion will be influenced, I think, positively by this" and thinks that the film will "help move the administration toward signing a treaty" with the Soviets.

Meyer counters that the version of the film seen by Markey and others is not the final cut to be shown by ABC. The film, which stars Jason Robards, Jobeth Williams, John Lithgow and John Cullum, has gone through many alterations since Meyer first read the script in May 1982. Originally planned as a two-night, four-hour telecast to be seen last May, the film was mysteriously scrubbed from the schedule by ABC last season and has now been edited down to a running time of two hours and five minutes (with commercials, an air time of about two hours and 15 minutes).

A popular rumor had it that the White House had pressured ABC executives to delay or dilute the film. ABC spokesman Dick Connelly says from New York, "As far as I know, that's not true." And ABC Circle Films president Brandon Stoddard has said, "I know nothing about such pressures and I haven't heard anything about them." White House spokesmen would not respond to inquiries about the rumor.

The cutting was made not to make the film more palatable or less anti-nuclear, ABC spokesmen say, but to tighten it. Meyer confirms this position. He says ABC originally needed a two-night run in order to recoup the $7 million production costs for the film but that he always considered the script padded with extraneous "filler" about the fates of various characters. In addition, says Meyer, "I didn't think anybody was going to tune in for Night Two of Armageddon."

Meyer does not say why ABC suddenly decided it didn't need a two-night run of the film, but he says the film has not been weakened by the editing. "There is no sort of political hoopla involved," says Meyer. "We argued a lot—that's usual for TV movies. They do what they want, and the director is told to get lost. But we argued not contents, but esthetics. They haven't betrayed us. I'm not betrayed. This is the film I set out to make. I can't say they betrayed the intent of the movie in any way."

Advertisers have not been beating down ABC's doors to buy commercial spots on the show. Network spokesmen keep saying they are about to announce major corporate sponsorship of the programming, but none has been announced so far. Care will be taken in the placement of commercials within so grim a drama, network sources say.

2

ABC spokesmen deny the network is nervous or panicky about the film But it may be a sign of nervousness that ABC has taken the extraordinary step of scheduling a special edition of the ABC News "Viewpoint" program, anchored by Ted Koppel, immediately following the telecast. Connelly says this was done because "we feel the issues raised in the film should be discussed, so we are providing the forum. We think people will want commentary and analysis."

Asked if the network is "scared," Meyer replies, "Sure," and suggests there is still the possibility ABC will choose not to show the film. "I'll believe it when I see it, that it's on the air," says Meyer, to which an ABC spokesman counters that the film will "absolutely" be shown. Baran says ABC's nervousness can be gauged by the small amount of publicity it has so far disseminated about the film. "With 'Winds of War,' they started promoting six months early," Baran says. "Their commitment is not as strong as it was to 'Winds of War.' They're just scared."

And Robert Papazian, producer of the film, says from his office in Los Angeles, "Yes, they're nervous—because anyone that takes a chance is going to be nervous. But they are taking the chance, and I take my hat off to them for that." Meyer adds, "In one of my books, I think it was 'The Seven-Per-Cent Solution,' I wrote that 'bravery consists of being scared stiff, and going ahead and doing something anyway.' I think that is what's happening here. I know the executives are very proud of the film. They're scared of it, but proud of it. They've called it the most important movie they've ever made."

Whether the "radical right" counter-offensive envisioned by Baran is actually taking shape remains to be seen, but already a New York newspaper has denounced the film as a political act, one that amounts to ABC's doing Yuri Andropov's work for him. Meyer calls the charge "the most McCarthyist thing" and Papazian says, "That's a ridiculous statement." The script for the film, by Edward Hume, never specifies which side, the Russians or the Americans, fired the first missiles, and Papazian says the film takes no political stance. "It's like we've done a film about cancer, and cancer can kill, and we are simply saying, 'Avoid cancer at all costs.' "

Fisher feels, however, that it's not that simple. "Nuclear war and the seriousness of it is the starting point for either side in this debate," Fisher says. "Nobody is for nuclear war. But the nuclear freeze side says, 'Nuclear war is terrible and therefore you should have a freeze.'

"The people on the other side have had an enormous lead time to prepare for this film—some of them saw it as much as two months ago—and they seem to be uniformly enthusiastic about it, so I wonder if we should be enthusiastic."

Baran hopes to get some of those involved in making the film to participate in the candlelight vigils, marches and rallies. Nothing would please ABC less. Meyer says he is turning down Baran's request and will make no statement about his own feelings on nuclear issues until after Nov. 20. "I have no wish to alienate that portion of the viewing audience that will perceive this film as the facts as we interpret them," Meyer says. "I don't want a conservative backlash saying 'Oh, this is just the Jews in Hollywood, this is just liberals in Hollywood, mounting their soapbox.' "

The subject of nuclear war is not precisely new to prime-time television. In the late 1950s, "Playhouse 90" aired an adaptation of Pat Frank's doomsday novel "Alas, Babylon" that included a scene of supermarket panic much like one in "The Day After." Rod Serling ended the world more than once on "The Twilight Zone."

In recent years, CBS nuked and destroyed Omaha with special effects as part of its five-part documentary "The Defense of the United States"; John Chancellor walked around Missouri and told viewers what effects a nuclear strike would have on the area for an NBC News documentary on the Salt II talks in 1979; last year, NBC televised, but badly bungled the promotion of, a two-part movie called "World War III" that ended with president Rock Hudson ordering up the missiles and weeping as he did so; and this year, NBC aired the Emmy Award-winning "Special Bulletin," which included the simulated nuclear destruction of Charleston, S.C. In that one, anti-nuclear activists were the ones who set off the bomb.

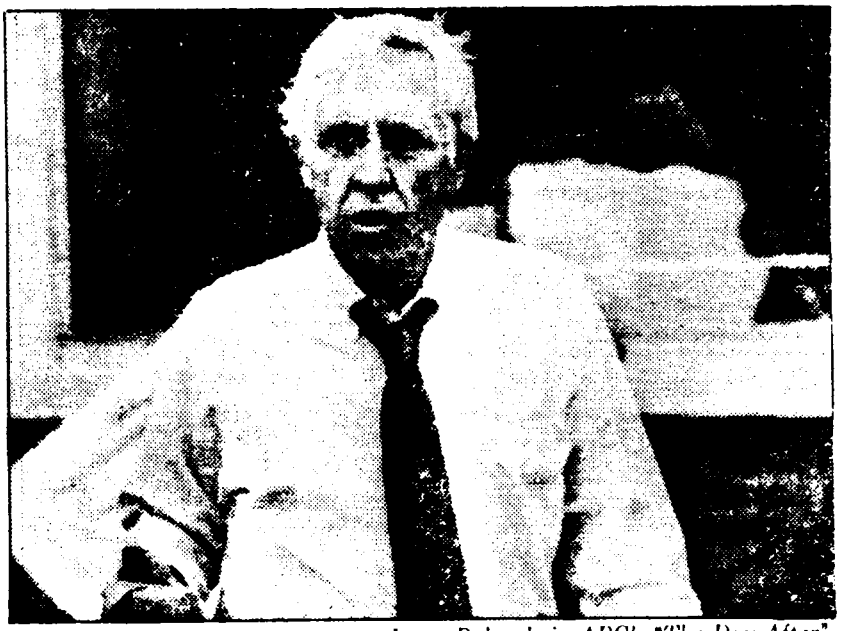
After all this—and such nuclear-themed theatrical films as this summer's smash hit "WarGames"—why should there be such hubbub over the ABC film? Meyer thinks it's because "The Day After" shows nuclear war's effects on typical middle-class Americans, not on generals in war rooms. "I have a general sense that nuclear war as depicted on the screen was always distilled in some way," Meyer says. "In 'Dr. Strangelove,' it was distilled with humor. In 'On the Beach' with distance [the film was set in Australia] and in 'Special Bulletin,' through the devices of TV journalism. Our film is an attempt to treat it without any distillation whatsoever, served up in a totally familiar format: the good old TV movie."

Rep. Markey says the film will have not only emotional but political impact. "What this movie does is put the lie to the whole notion of 'limited nuclear war' for 25 million viewers in one swat," says Markey. "Support for the president's 'peace-through-strength' program is centered in the Midwest. But when people in Kansas and vicinity—Arkansas through the Dakotas, that half-moon path where our ICBMs are planted—see this film, they'll never again think of fallout shelters as a way of protecting themselves in a nuclear war.

"The film takes the whole issue out of the abstract and makes it very understandable for people, not just for experts. The single greatest problem we have in this area is our natural deference to 'experts.' I think the film's most profound effect will be on people who have been deferring to military decisions and Pentagon decisions, on nuclear issues—ordinary people who've been listening to the president on this issue."

Markey asks and answers the question, "Will people want a mutually verifiable arms treaty after they see this movie? Yes." And then he is asked if it wouldn't be nice for the Russians to be able to see such a movie, too. "Would that it could be shown in the Soviet Union," he says. "But the alternative would be that no country does anything to educate itself on this. Otherwise there will come an inevitable time—20, 25 years from now—that we have the holocaust."

'The Day After'

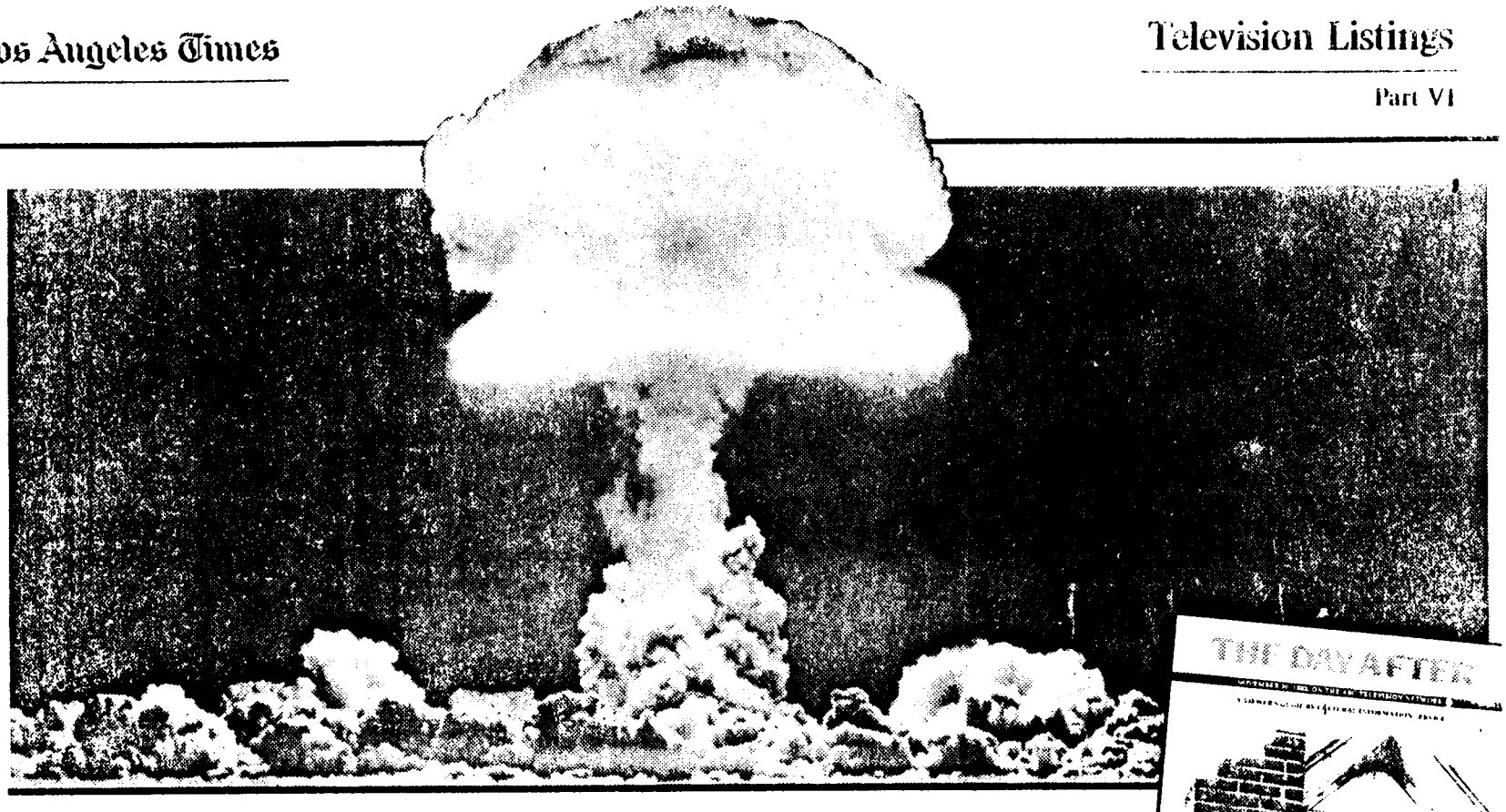


Jason Robards in ABC's "The Day After"

There is much in the film that is terrifying, and not just in the gruesome details of nuclear destruction. The film includes scenes in which people of Kansas look out their windows and see the ICBMs being launched into the sky. One shot has a stadium full of people watching a football game in the foreground while missiles streak into the sky above them, on their way to the Soviet Union. Anne Kronenberg, executive director of the Nuclear Freeze Foundation headquartered here, saw a bootleg copy of the film recently. "Oh God, I thought it was very powerful," she says. "I kept having nightmares all week."

Baran says ABC should welcome his efforts to organize forums and meetings keyed to the broadcast, not be frightened by them. "The film leaves people overwhelmed," he says. "It leaves people with no hope. Millions of kids will be watching, and who needs 10 million kids with nightmares? We don't want this film to be a preview of coming attractions. We're offering outlets for action, ways that people can make themselves heard and learn about the issue. Because the way we feel about it is, it's still The Day Before, and there's still time to do something about it."

Meyer says, "I didn't want to make this movie. I wanted to get on with my career, go on dates, have a good time. I did it to be a Boy Scout, to do my good deed for the day. I did this to be a good citizen; I thought it was a civic responsibility." Papazian says, "It was a very difficult project to do, it was a very difficult project to produce, to get over the obstacles of research and so on, and it's something one can turn back on and say, 'I've contributed,' and I think that's what makes me the happiest. Because very few people can say that."



HOWARD ROSENBERG

WHEN THE BUTTON WAS PUSHED

It doesn't matter.

James Watt stays; he leaves. The Orioles win; the Phillies win. It rains today; it doesn't. You get the raise; you don't. "Dallas" is first; it isn't. The price of lettuce is up; it's down. Home computers are the rage; they aren't. "The Right Stuff" is right; it's wrong.

None of it matters compared with ending the threat of nuclear obliteration.

That is what you carry away from "The Day After," a shocking, horrifying, utterly bleak and highly controversial ABC movie about the lethal impact on Lawrence, Kan., when nearby Kansas City is destroyed by Soviet missiles.

Whether "The Day After" is dramatically good (which it is) seems almost irrelevant compared with the message it pounds home. Because of its subject and potential audience via TV (Channels 7, 3 and 10) on Nov. 20, it may be the most important movie ever made.

That sounds like hyperbole. However, even a TV ratings flop can reach 10-15 million viewers, a hit four or five times that many, a blockbuster perhaps 100 million.

Those who do watch "The Day After" will see a story that builds slowly, level by level, swelling with David Raksin's haunting score as the film follows the routine lives of ordinary people living or working in Lawrence amid rising East-West tensions.

Then U.S. missiles roar from their underground silos in rural Kansas and are answered minutes later by Soviet missiles.

Jason Robards plays one of the central characters, a Kansas City surgeon who is making the 37-mile trip to Lawrence when the missiles hit. Asked later what it looked like, he replies:

"The sun exploding."

Director Nicholas Meyer's staging is masterful and Robert Blalack's special effects are among the most effective I've seen. There are scenes of awesome destruction, fire storms, people vaporized where they stand and others—is the body that of a black or is it charred?—burned beyond recognition. There are mass graves. There are survivors, the walking dead and hopeless who have lost their hair and aged years within days. There are firing squads, chaos, looting. In seconds, the screen in front of you seems to die.

There is the terrible feeling of being alone and isolated. A radio transmitter crackles an eerie SOS: "This is Lawrence, Kan. Is anybody there? Anybody at all?"

The impact is crushing on a personal level. You hear yourself moaning. At one point I was holding back tears.

We never know which superpower pushed the button first and it doesn't matter here. You're in your front yard or in a field or at work or on the road or looking out your bedroom window—and suddenly you see *our* missiles zoom skyward and you know *theirs* are on the way. What do you do? Where do you go?

Everyone is always saying how catastrophic a nuclear holocaust would be, and you accept it on a visceral level. But never has the message smacked you across the face like this and bounced you off the wall.

"We're not talking about Hiroshima anymore," someone says. "Hiroshima is peanuts."

The movie's cast—Robards, John Collum, Jobeth Williams, Steven Guttenberg, Bibi Besch, Lori Lethin and John Lithgow—is first-rate.

Written by Edward Hume, "The Day After" has arrived on the scene—slimmed to 2¼ hours from its original four—with an explosion of its own.

ABC edgily held it back from an earlier scheduled air date and at one point Meyer expressed doubt that the movie would ever be shown publicly. For a while, only pirated copies were available.

The network has since launched a massive campaign to promote the

Please see 'THE DAY,' Page 8

Atomic explosion, the ultimate horror, in "The Day After."

'THE DAY AFTER'

Continued from Page 1

movie, including a special screening in Lawrence that drew wide press coverage. Anti-nuclear groups have seized upon the "The Day After" as a chance to advance the freeze movement.

ABC plans to cluster all commercials before the movie's missile attack occurs. However, there have been reports that the movie has been an extremely difficult sell because of its grim content and that ads are being solicited at bargain rates.

That night's competition is tough—the first episode of NBC's seven-hour miniseries about John F. Kennedy's White House years. However, instead of cringing, advertisers should be proud to buy time on "The Day After." Those who don't merely because it shocks rather than soothes, should be ashamed. The clock is ticking for them too.

Syndicated columnist William Rusher has accused ABC of being politically motivated in showing "The Day After" and has urged viewers to boycott advertisers who buy time on the movie. A reader responding to Rusher's column in a local newspaper went even further, charging the network with trying to frighten children with "X-rated" violence.

Are they kidding? Showing nuclear nightmare is political? Depicting death and suffering from missiles is gratuitously violent?

The irony is that—awful as it is—the catastrophe you see on "The Day After" would be mild compared with the real thing, a point made at the end of the movie.

Everyone should see "The Day After." Forget about "Psycho," "Friday the 13th" and "Halloween." They don't matter.

This is a horror story.

ABC STILL TINKERING WITH 'DAY'

By CLARKE TAYLOR

NEW YORK—ABC TV held a screening of "The Day After" for reporters on Tuesday, and network executives indicated in a press conference afterward that they still don't quite know how to handle the controversial film, which depicts a nuclear holocaust.

Just a month before the film is scheduled to air, ABC is still making adjustments on it, apprehensive that the movie will seem to take sides in the national nuclear debate. Further, the network still has not decided how many advisories it should insert in the film, warning parents of the traumatic subject matter.

After the screening, Brandon Stoddard, president of ABC Motion Pictures, broke the silence in Manhattan's Cinema III theater to announce to several hundred reporters that a line from the film they had just seen will be deleted by air time because it is now is considered "too political."

Although the film does not definitely state whether the United States or the Soviet Union initiates the fictitious nuclear war, the line to be deleted refers to the Soviet Union being "provoked" by United States Pershing 2 missile launchers, like those now proposed for deployment in Western Europe by the Reagan Administration. Stoddard explained that the Pershing controversy has grown substantially and become more imminent since the film was completed.

"Simply stated, we want this film to be apolitical," Stoddard said, reiterating the network's posture since ABC first announced the project. He said that a reporter brought the political implications of the Pershing missile aspect to ABC's attention.

In an effort to emphasize its impartial stand, ABC News plans to present an hourlong edition of its "Viewpoint" series immediately following "The Day After," during which all aspects of nuclear weapons policies will be discussed.

Citing the "great sensitivity" of the film's subject matter, Stoddard said that ABC still is considering a special introduction for family viewers preceeding the Nov. 20 broadcast. He also said parental advisories may be inserted throughout the two-hour film, one at the start of the program and another possibly to be added after the first third of the film.

Stoddard said that 400,000 "study guides" will be sent this week to schools and churches for distribution nationwide. However, the study guide—as well as an on-screen bibliography—lists books by writers closely associated with the anti-nuclear movement, including Dr. Helen Caldicott, Jonathan Schell, the Los Angeles Times' Robert Scheer and Robert Jay Lifton.

Both Stoddard and Meyer said Tuesday that "The Day After" has presented special problems since its conception in 1982. Originally scheduled for broadcast last May on two successive nights, the $6- million film was cut and bounced from that date.

Meyer said Tuesday that he believes all the excised material was superfluous and that "nothing was censored" by the network. He said that he initially suggested a two- hour dramatization—"nobody wants to tune in for two nights of Armageddon"—but that ABC executives at the time insisted on the longer version to ensure more commercial time.

Advertisers have not lined up to buy time on "The Day After." Stoddard said Tuesday he does not know whether there are as yet any firm advertisers, and he added, "I don't think we'll know until Nov. 19."

Asked why, with all the evident concerns about politics, children and advertising, ABC went ahead with the film, Stoddard said: "The issue of nuclear war has been on the back shelves of all our minds for 38 years, and certainly the *experience* of a nuclear war has never been explored on television like it is in this film. That's why we made it."

ABC Film Depicting Consequences of Nuclear Attack Stirring Debate

By SALLY BEDELL SMITH

The ABC-TV film "The Day After," which graphically depicts the consequences of massive nuclear attack against the United States, is not scheduled to appear for seven weeks, but already it is generating emotional controversy on both sides of the nuclear-arms issue.

Because of widespread support for the film among groups urging the limitation of nuclear weapons, there has been growing criticism of ABC among organizations that advocate a stronger nuclear defense. As a result, some ABC officials say they are becoming concerned that the film is being made a political issue.

Numerous antinuclear-weapons activists have seen copies of the $7 million film, which ABC says were made without the network's authorization, although organizations on the other side apparently have not. "It would appear that someone involved in the production of the film has decided that it is a tool to help one side of the argument and has set about attempting to do that," said Tony Makris, director of Congressional relations for the American Security Council, a Washington-based organization advocating increased national defense.

A minister consoles survivors of a nuclear attack in "The Day After," scheduled for Nov. 20 on ABC.

'$7 Million Ad Job'

Most of the weapons-limitations groups are planning an array of events — teach-ins, press conferences, and appearances on radio and television shows — surrounding the film's showing on Nov. 20 in an effort to attract support for some form of disarmament among the film's viewers.

"ABC is doing a $7 million advertising job for our issue," said Janet Michaud, executive director of the Campaign Against Nuclear War, a disarmament group based in Washington. "We couldn't begin to reach as many people as they reach if we pooled all our resources. We want to reach new constituencies."

Those who have seen the contraband copies of the film include representatives of many of the major groups advocating disarmament or a freeze of nuclear weapons at current levels as well as several members of the House of Representatives who have been active in the nuclear-freeze movement. Representative Edward J. Markey, Democrat of Massachusetts, said: "I believe it is going to be the most powerful television program in history. People will be irrevocably changed in terms of their attitude about nuclear war."

Mr. Markey, who sponsored the nuclear-freeze resolution in the House, is planning to introduce a Congressional resolution praising ABC for making the film. Because of the film, he said, "the cause of arms control will be advanced." "Anyone," he said, "who advocates limited survivable nuclear war is not going to be happy with this movie."

At the same time, advocates of a stronger defense have begun to attack the ABC film and to plan activities of their own — including demonstrations at ABC television stations and letter-writing campaigns to potential advertisers. They contend that the film is dangerous because it is an emotional rather than a reasoned approach to nuclear war. And they maintain that the film's presentation — several weeks before the scheduled deployment of the United States Pershing 2 nuclear missiles in Europe — could help the Soviet Union's efforts to prevent that deployment by stirring up public opinion against a buildup of nuclear arms.

William A. Rusher, publisher of The National Review, charges this week in an editorial — his second attacking ABC for planning to show the film — that it will "generate an ignorant public hysteria at a time when calm resolution to preserve a credible deterrent is called for." The conservative magazine Human Events, in its current issue, calls "The Day After" a "propaganda spectacular." Both Mr. Rusher and Cliff Kincaid, the writer of the Human Events article, said they had not seen "The Day After."

ABC officials emphasize that the two-hour film is intended to be nonpolitical. "We specifically took painstaking care not to in any way make the film a political statement for either side on the issue of nuclear warfare," said Anthony Thomopoulos, president of the ABC Broadcast Group.

"A backlash is bound to come. This film is going to arouse passions, and we could pay a price for it," said one ABC official, who requested anonymity. Among the concerns are that conservative critics could dissuade advertisers from buying commercial time, pressure ABC affiliated stations not to carry the program and to discourage viewers from tuning in.

Ads Cost $135,000 Apiece

The film, which stars Jason Robards, John Cullum, Jobeth Williams and Steven Guttenberg, focuses on Kansas City and several outlying communities following a full-scale nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union. Although the film never makes clear which side initiated hostilities, two references are made to Soviet concern over the deployment of Pershing missiles. One, a fragment of a radio broadcast, quotes a Soviet official as saying that it was "the coordinated movement of Pershing 2 launchers that provoked the original Soviet" action.

Mindful of the film's controversial implications, ABC has scheduled a special edition of "Viewpoint," ABC's periodic forum for an exchange of ideas, for one hour following the conclusion of "The Day After" at 10:15 P.M. Participating in the program will be a panel of experts representing various views on nuclear issues. "We recognize that the film will stimulate debate, and part of our mission is to provide a court in which people with different opinions can play," said George Watson, executive producer of "Viewpoint."

ABC has been screening the film for potential sponsors for the last month. According to one ABC sales official, several advertisers have agreed to buy commercial time, which is being sold in 25 30-second spots for an average price of $135,000 apiece. However, ABC is keeping the names of its advertisers confidential for fear that critics of the film will try to pressure sponsors into dropping out. "We don't want to open them up to any kind of nonsense from pressure groups," said the official, who requested anonymity.

However, ABC officials are determined to show the film even if the network stands to lose money. "The film will air on Nov. 20 regardless of how many advertisers are in it," said Mr. Thomopoulos.

A number of antinuclear-weapons groups will sponsor activities keyed to the showing of "The Day After." Physicians for Social Responsibility, a national organization that claims a membership of 30,000, is organizing discussion groups around the country to follow the program.

In Kansas City and Lawrence, Kan., a town of 53,000, where the film was shot, candlelight vigils will be held immediately following the program, and the next day town meetings in both locations will explore the questions raised by the film. "Our purpose is to convey a message about nuclear war to take back to Washington," said Allan Hanson, the coordinator of Let Lawrence Live, the group organizing activities in Lawrence with funds from the physicians' organization. "We want the arms race brought to an end right away."

In Washington, Ground Zero, an arms-reduction group, is producing more than 100,000 copies of a pamphlet about nuclear issues and is attempting to organize thousands of viewing groups around the country in high schools, colleges and churches, according to Theo Brown, deputy director of Ground Zero. Its slogan: "The Day After": too frightening to watch alone, but every American should watch it."

Other groups, such as the Campaign Against Nuclear War, in Washington, are raising money to buy advertising time on television, radio and in newspapers offering a toll-free number for viewers to call after the program to learn more about preventing nuclear war.

The Center for Defense Information, a Washington-based group headed by retired military officers that supports a nuclear freeze, is producing a 60-second commercial narrated by Paul Newman, the actor, offering viewers a "nuclear war prevention kit." The center has raised half of the $100,000 it needs to place these commercials at the end of "The Day After" in dozens of cities around the country, according to Arthur Kanegis, media director for the center. In addition, the center's half-hour documentary about the nuclear issue narrated by Mr. Newman, "War Without Winners," will be shown following the ABC film in 50 cities around the country — but in some cases not on the same channels that will be showing "The Day After," for example, in New York City, it is scheduled on WNEW-TV.

Concern Over Young Viewers

Many of these activities are being planned because antinuclear activists believe that they must counteract the film's despair. "The film is paralyzing," said Susan Alexander, associate director of Educators for Social Responsibility, a national organization representing teachers and administrators. "There is no hope offered. People could just walk away from the film and the issue altogether. So it is important to prepare people to get involved in a positive way," she added.

Many who have seen the film have expressed special concern about how it will affect children. "We are urging families to actively prevent anybody under 12 from watching it," said Miss Alexander. However, to assist teachers in helping older students with the film, the educators group is joining with several other organizations, including the Union of Concerned Scientists, in a series of symposiums at more than 500 high schools and colleges around the country during the week of Nov. 5.

In the New York City area, a special conference for educators will be held in Suffolk County on Nov. 5. It will be called "Nuclear Lessons: Teaching for 'The Day After.'" The conference is being organized by Representative Thomas Downey, Democrat of New York, who saw "The Day After" several weeks ago.

Campaigns Being Organized

So far, ABC says, it has not shown the film to any special-interest groups or politicians, although such screenings are planned for the coming weeks. Mr. Thomopolous said he was "horrified" by the wide circulation of contraband copies of the film. He said: "I have had no discussion with any of those groups. We will do nothing to politicize this film."

Though no "peace through strength" groups, advocating a nuclear buildup, say they have seen the film, several groups are nevertheless beginning to mobilize to present their views on the subject. Accuracy in Media, a conservative press-watchdog group in Washington, is sending letters to 450 potential advertisers. "We are pointing out that this movie is generating enthusiasm among people opposed to having NATO missiles stationed in Western Europe," said Reed Irvine, chairman of Accuracy in Media.

Young Americans for Freedom, a conservative youth group with 100,000 members nationwide, is planning a teach-in at the University of Kansas in Lawrence to promote nuclear deterrence. There will also be demonstrations outside ABC offices in New York, Washington and Los Angeles, as well as letters to advertisers contending that the show is "propaganda that is detrimental to our national interest," said Robert Dolan, national chairman of the group.

A number of advocates of a bolstered nuclear defense are particularly concerned that antinuclear groups could have the edge in influencing public opinion because they have seen the film so far in advance. John Fisher, president of the American Security Council, said: "By showing nuclear war and how terrible it is, you have repeated the only argument the nuclear freezers have. People get very emotional about that, and whoever is best organized will capitalize on that emotion."

The Kansas City Times

Thursday, October 13, 1983

Nuclear war hits home in Lawrence premiere of controversial film

By Jake Thompson
Of the Mid-America Staff

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Seconds before a nuclear bomb levels Kansas City in the movie "The Day After," there is an unworldly silence. Animals on Missouri farms freeze, breezes cease and city dwellers gawk skyward.

When an audience viewed that scene Wednesday in the movie's worldwide premiere at the University of Kansas, it also was silent. In fact, the audience remained silent through much of the first showing of ABC-TV's graphic and politically controversial portrayal of the day nuclear war decimates the United States and the Soviet Union.

The film's few humorous passages didn't even draw much response, and the people exiting the movie appeared somber. Some said they were extremely depressed. A few regaled the movie as mere Hollywood drama. Some recounted sights in Lawrence they recognized from the made-for-television film shot largely in the city and its environs.

"I came expecting it to be horrible, as it was," said Laurie Mackey, who saw the movie with a friend, Judy Roitman. Both live in Lawrence.

Referring to President Reagan and President Yuri Andropov of the Soviet Union, Ms. Roitman said, "I think Reagan and Andropov ought to see it on a giant screen and think long and hard about their responsibility."

Review says 'The Day After' is compelling despite faults. Page A-4.

Karen Carlin, wife of Kansas Gov. John Carlin, said after the last showing of the film: "It's certainly an important issue that everyone should consider. It certainly should make everyone stop and think."

The movie has become a centerpiece for national groups against the buildup of nuclear arms, even a month before it is to be shown on ABC. But some national leaders and politicians who advocate a strong defense to maintain peace decry the film as propaganda.

What seemed to stun Wednesday's four audiences of about 500 people each was the near-hopelessness of life after a nuclear attack. For survivors, death comes excruciatingly from radiation sickness. The future is a maybe.

The movie's director, Nicholas Meyer, was on hand and watched people as they left. He described the audiences as "shell-shocked" and added: "What I have learned today is that there is a lot of controversial commentary about the film, but not by those who've seen the film. The film is its own best spokesman."

The movie opens with scenes from downtown Lawrence, the University of Kansas campus, the Kansas City skyline, lush and bountiful farm land and the Country Club Plaza's spurting fountains — on a day much like Wednesday.

Then lives are exploded and terror and pandemonium reign in Kansas City during the half-hour between the announcement of war and the arrival of the warheads.

At the end Lawrence is an eroding refuge of dying humanity; Kansas City a plain of scorched rubble. Viewers watch life go from terrifying to numbing.

"It's a very emotional movie," said Kansas state Sen. Wint Winter, a Lawrence Republican. "People are going to take action, to do as the film says at the end, make sure this doesn't happen.

"Living here in this town," he added, "here are scenes with an exceptional impact because they depict the devastating effect on our town. It's not one you walk out and say, 'That's a nice movie.' It demands action."

But to Richard Brown, a KU student, the portrayal was mild.

"It did leave the possibility to survive a nuclear war, and that's not how it would be," he said.

A different criticism came from Jerry Keating of the KU chapter of the Young Americans for Freedom, a conservative group. He said that the film was effective but that he wished it also would be shown in the Soviet Union. Otherwise, he said, "It's a movie made by ABC to promote nuclear hysteria."

Hysteria wasn't the feeling described by Paul Roofe, a retired anatomy professor at KU. Twenty-five years ago, he said, he was co-chairman of the university's radiation department. Wednesday he said he was "horror struck."

"I know all the ins and outs of what radiation does to the organism as a whole," Mr. Roofe said as he left early to beat the crush leaving at the end of one showing. "But for the ordinary person this was a sickening appearance. It is really devastating.

"Politically, I think ABC is doing a wonderful worldwide piece of education, and I hope it will bring politicians and statesmen to their senses."

Others said they were shocked and left feeling empty at what they called a realistic vision of nuclear destruction, perhaps greatly intensified by easily recognizable sights sprinkled throughout the film.

For example, Allen Field House, normally filled with KU basketball players or indoor track stars, becomes a repository for hundreds of people dying silently on stretchers.

ABC officials predict the effect on millions of viewers likely to see "The Day After" in their living rooms on Nov. 20 will be numbing.

Several organizations, including Let Lawrence Live and Target Kansas City, local groups against nuclear arms buildup, plan town-hall meetings in Lawrence and Kansas City in conjunction with the movie's broadcast.

Josh Baran, a publicist for the groups, was on the KU campus Wednesday before the movie's premiere to distribute the groups' literature and buttons. He said the organizations intend to have people from both sides of the nuclear debate talk to television viewers after the movie as a kind of therapeutic exchange and discussion.

"It does no good to have 60 million people depressed and having nightmares," he said of the film's potential TV audience.

The first three showings Wednesday at KU were open to the general public. The 8 p.m. showing was for Kansas state officials, Lawrence city leaders, KU officials and invited guests. Mr. Meyer introduced the film, which is dedicated to Lawrence, and said, "It's more your film than anyone else's."

Among the 500 viewers for the 8 p.m. showing were KU Chancellor Gene Budig and his wife, Gretchen; Mrs. Carlin; Lawrence Mayor David Longhurst; and state Sen. Edward F. Reilly Jr., a Republican from Leaven-

Viewpoints

The Dallas Morning News

Thursday, October 13, 1983

Politicizing a TV film

By WILLIAM. F. BUCKLEY

LISTEN to this, you will get a kick out of it.

A month ago, the editors of *National Review*, the conservative fortnightly of which I am editor met at their regular editorial conference. On the agenda was the upcoming ABC extravaganza featuring the horrors of nuclear war. One editor made the suggestion that the film (it is called *The Day After*) be hailed as a wonderfully creative psychological boost for increased defense expenditures to guard against nuclear war. In other words, pat ABC on the back, as though, in anticipation of the return of bubonic plague, it had planned a film theatrically showing what could happen if the plague hit an unprepared America.

Ha ha. Many of the journal's readers were unamused. The point being, of course, that on this subject, whatever the mind tells you, the emotions tend to prevail. Any American uninoculated by the See-Through virus will respond spastically to certain things. If you show him a picture of a school with all-white children, he will come out for busing. If you show him a city slum, he will come out for some new federal program. If you show him post-nuclear rubble, he will come out against the MX missile. It is really that simple.

THE PRODUCERS of the ABC film have said defensively that no effort whatever was made "to politicize the film." That statement, made by Mr. Anthony Thomopoulos, president of the ABC Broadcast Group, will be bracketed with Andropov's insistence that the Soviet Union had shot down a spy plane, as the two outstanding flat-out lies of the fall season. One reporter called me and asked whether the writer who had denounced the film in the conservative journal had actually seen it. No. "Well, how do you know it's anti-nuclear?" He might as well have asked how would one know, without first seeing it, that a film on the life of Martin Luther King produced by Jesse Jackson was in favor of civil rights.

It later got out that some people had seen the film, and guess what. To quote Sally Bedell Smith of the *New York Times* (Oct. 6), "Although the film never makes clear which side initiated hostilities (the film is about a few survivors in post-nuclearized America), two references are made to Soviet concern over the deployment of Pershing missiles. One, a fragment of a radio broadcast, quotes a Soviet official as saying that it was 'the coordinated movement of Pershing 2 launchers that provoked the original Soviet' action." That's ABC's idea of not politicizing a film.

And, of course, the peaceniks will run with it. Demonstrations are being arranged to frame the ABC event. All the people who believe that the way to get on with the Soviet Union is to give in to the Soviet Union will declare a national holiday. Something called the Center for Defense Information is planning a 60-second commercial narrated by Paul Newman offering viewers a "nuclear war prevention kit." I plan to send in for one of those kits, and if Mr. Newman doesn't send me an MX missile, I'm going to report him to the Postal Service people for fraud. Oh dear. Will it ever end?

TO BOIL it down: 1) The ABC people are getting into politics in a very big way. 2) Of all the strategic decisions made since the formation of NATO in 1949, the most important is the decision to deploy theater nuclear weapons of the Pershing and cruise missile type in Europe in December, as planned, as called for by our allies. 3) It is clearly the intention of the Soviet Union to attempt to abort that deployment. To that end, it has marshaled a) its agents; and b) its dupes to ventilate the biggest non sequitur in military history, namely that development by the United States of its defensive arsenal makes nuclear war likelier, rather than unlikelier. The $7 million cost of this massive deception is, of course, being paid for by American business. Or is it possible that, this time, American business will say no?

William Buckley's column is distributed by Universal Press Syndicate.

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory is one of the nation's 2 major nuclear weapons design facilities.

A14 ☆☆ Oct. 23, 1983 S.F. Sunday Examiner & Chronicle

All-out nuclear war would create deep freeze, Livermore study says

By Richard Harris
Examiner science writer

LIVERMORE — Within a few weeks of the war, a devastating freeze would settle on the Northern Hemisphere.

Massive amounts of soot from the burning cities and forests would diffuse through the atmosphere, blotting out the sun. High noon would look like the dead of the night.

The average temperature would drop as much as 72 degrees at the centers of continents in this hemisphere. Although slightly warmer temperatures would be found on the coast, the average North American temperature might be 15 degrees. The freeze would last from several weeks to several months.

These are the findings of some preliminary research by Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory scientists who have been studying the global effects of an all-out nuclear war.

The research — findings of which were presented in Erice, Italy, at the third annual conference on the global effects of nuclear war — is based on a war model that assumes detonation of 6,000 nuclear weapons with the total explosive power of 5 billion tons of TNT.

"It's not the worst possible case, but it's a severe case," said Michael Mac Cracken, an atmospheric scientist at the Livermore laboratory.

The Hiroshima bomb had the explosive power of 17,000 tons of TNT.

The effect of smoke generated in such an all-out war is a largely unstudied factor, and would certainly have to be viewed as a mere side effect.

The study did not address the better-known ground effects of a nuclear war, which could rapidly kill more than 100 million people.

Although scientists have yet to study the effects of the cooling they have projected, the sub-freezing weather would at least cause catastrophic crop failures and complicate the much-criticized plans for civil defense.

Mac Cracken said that although the effects would be severe, they do not substantiate claims that nuclear war would end life on earth or the human race. They should, however, deter anyone from instigating a nuclear war, especially a third nation thinking about triggering a war to destroy the superpowers.

According to the exploratory study, smoke from burning cities appears to be a bigger problem than depletion of the ozone layer, which protects the earth from damaging ultraviolet rays.

Depletion of the global ozone layer may be about half of what has been described in official and popularized works such as Jonathan Schell's book, "The Fate of the Earth."

The new calculations suggest that the ozone layer will have gaping holes the size of Western Europe, which would move slowly around the earth. This would cause temporary snow blindness and let in a skin-blistering dose of solar radiation to unprotected people and animals in less than an hour. But smoke and dust in the atmosphere may block the damaging rays after a few days, the study suggests.

Other findings:

- Radioactive fallout from a full-scale nuclear war appears to be 10 times stronger than originally thought. It would quickly kill people and animals who happen to be in the first rainfall, contaminate livestock and food supplies, and give a dose equivalent to 20 X-rays to the average Northern Hemisphere resident. This increases the risk of permanent genetic changes and birth defects in humans and animals.
- The smoke also could cause enormous temperature inversions, possibly hastening the spread of soot and radiation, and slowing the atmosphere's normal cleansing processes for months.

Effects apparently would be confined to the Northern Hemisphere, because the calculated disruptions are not sufficient to break the strong natural barrier between weather systems in the north and south.

There is much uncertainty about the findings, Mac Cracken cautioned.

"All the effects we talk about are very dependent on the actual (war) scenario," he said, in addition to the time of year, weather at the time of attack, and unknowns such as how cities burn.

The model is also dependent on complex interplay among smoke, chemicals and weather changes that have yet to be calculated, he said.

"There are interactions between all these effects, but there has been a tendency to think about them one at a time," Mac Cracken said. "We're really just starting to look at them together."

The new calculations of Mac Cracken and his colleagues are due in part to changes in the nuclear arsenals. Over the past 15 years, the United States and the Soviet Union have built smaller, more accurate weapons. Scientists studying the global effects of nuclear war assume that more missiles and bombs would be used in a major attack, leading to more fires in cities and forests.

As warheads become smaller for military purposes, they become less of a threat to the ozone layer, according to Fred Luther, another atmospheric scientist at Livermore.

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ABC NEWS WILL PRESENT A SPECIAL "VIEWPOINT" PROGRAM IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING TELECAST OF "THE DAY AFTER," A MOVIE DEPICTING THE EFFECTS OF NUCLEAR WAR

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The Programs Will Air on Nov. 20, and on "Viewpoint," a Distinguished Panel of Experts Reflecting Different Points of View Will Discuss the Issues Raised by "The Day After"

– – – – –

ABC News announced that it will broadcast a one-hour special edition of "Viewpoint" immediately following "The Day After," **SUNDAY, NOV. 20** (8:00-10:15 p.m., EST), a television motion picture depicting the effects of nuclear war on the town of Lawrence, Kansas.

"Viewpoint" will be anchored by Ted Koppel.

"Although 'The Day After' is a dramatization of a nuclear catastrophe, the question of an actual nuclear confrontation concerns people everywhere," said Roone Arledge, President of ABC News. "'Viewpoint' will provide a forum for intelligent comment and analysis of this issue – perhaps the most important of our time."

A distinguished panel of experts reflecting different points of view will discuss the issues raised by "The Day After." They will be asked to address the basic questions of international relations and survival in a nuclear age.

"Viewpoint" will be broadcast live from Washington, D.C. An audience will participate in the program and pose questions to the panel.

ABC News Vice President George Watson is Executive Producer in Charge of "Viewpoint." The Executive Producer is ABC News Vice President William E. Lord, who is also Executive Producer of ABC News "Nightline."

* * * * * * *

THE DAY AFTER

...beyond imagining

PRODUCER'S PLATFORM

by

Robert A. Papazian

In August of 1981, I received a phone call from Stu Samuels, Vice President, Motion Pictures for Television, inquiring whether I might be available to produce a project for ABC Circle Films. I asked him the nature of the project. His response was simple: "Just read it."

Two weeks later, I was meeting with Ed Hume, the author of "The Day After," Stu Samuels, and Brandon Stoddard. At that meeting I had no idea what I had committed to undertake. Months later, after extensive research, numerous coast-to-coast phone calls with Ed Hume, and countless hours coming to terms with the enormity of the project, I felt that with the support of ABC we could bring the film to fruition.

Once we got the go-ahead for the project, the pressure was on. I stared across my cluttered desk at my Associate Producer, Stephanie Austin; she asked me my personal reaction to the project and I replied: "Our understanding of nuclear weapons has been largely based on the events at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but technology has advanced since then . . . and it's not just the technological advances that concern me, but what those advances mean in human terms." For many years people have heard words like nuclear warhead, missiles, radiation, shock waves, megatonnage, etc., and have barely comprehended their meanings. "The Day After" attempts to clarify these terms, not by dwelling on politics or war rooms, generals or strategists; but by focusing on humanity — people — people from all walks of life, fathers and mothers, daughters and sons, husbands and wives, and the effects that a nuclear detonation would have on their lives.

Many people have asked me "Why Kansas City?" It is the geographical center of the United States, it is one of the "breadbaskets" of America, and it is surrounded by strategic military targets which make it vulnerable in a nuclear attack. What happens in our film is a microcosm of what could happen globally.

Knowledge is the basis of understanding, and "The Day After" provides the television viewing audience with the first step toward that understanding. It is a compassionate, meticulously researched representation of the events leading up to, during, and after a nuclear attack. As the producer, I have approached this project with responsibility, integrity, and passion.

* * * * * * *

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THE DAY AFTER

...beyond imagining

WRITER'S PLATFORM

by

Edward Hume

Three years ago this fall ABC asked if I would be interested in writing a dramatic television film on the subject of nuclear warfare. I was astonished by the invitation. No commercial network had ever moved so boldly to deal with the world's most urgent problem. (For if we can't solve this one, we may be spared all others).

Eighteen years ago, The BBC commissioned Peter Watkins to produce a film depicting the effects of a nuclear blast on Kent, England. But when "The War Game" was finished and previewed, it was summarily dropped from the air as "too horrifying for the medium of television." (The film was later released theatrically – with an X-rating).

"The Day After" is scheduled to air Sunday, November 20, and I am still astonished. Why is this event so significant?

The farther we move in time from Hiroshima, the more distant and unreal becomes the bomb itself. (Who wants to think about such things, anyway? Much too horrifying). Yet in these 38 years nuclear weapons in all their wondrous variety have become the preeminent strategic tools of the superpowers. And we don't even know what they are.

Oh, we hear all about MX dense-paks, megatonnage stats, SS-20s and Pershing-2s, 50,000 warheads on both sides and so forth. But what are we really talking about? Where are these things? What do they do? What would happen to us if, by accident or intent, they were ever actually used? That is what "The Day After" is all about – the experience of nuclear war.

How do I presume to know what life would be like after such an event? "The Day After" is, after all, a work of fiction, a monstrous unflinching what-if. But the story is grounded in certain facts of life. We live in a land where, for example, ICBMs are quietly canistered in cornfields up your neighbor's farmroad. We know from an extensive government literature what these weapons can do and the strategic scenarios designed to use them.

(MORE)

However, "The Day After" is not about politics or politicians or military decision-makers. It does not point fingers or take sides. It is simply about you and me – doctors, farmers, teachers, students, brothers and kid sisters, engaged in the usual love and labor of life in the month of September.

While the catastrophic events occur on a global scale, "The Day After" takes place entirely in the Kansas City-Lawrence, Kansas area – the American heartland. The same story could just as well be taking place in Boston, Murmansk, Comiso or Heidelberg.

The prospect of nuclear war may be unlikely. Some even argue that it is the very threat of nuclear war which has kept the peace for 38 years. But 38 years is not forever. And as long as governments continue to conduct policy with these weapons, we must continue to assess the risk that someday, somewhere, somehow, something like this might happen.

My hope is that "The Day After" will make a positive contribution to the current debate on the value of nuclear weapons, and remain forever a work of fiction.

* * * * * * *

THE DAY AFTER

...beyond imagining

DIRECTOR'S PLATFORM

by

Nicholas Meyer

What would nuclear war be like? This simply phrased question constitutes the premise and the purpose of the film, "The Day After." Our film does not concern itself with Presidents and policies, with war rooms and strategy; instead it concentrates on the lives of average citizens and attempts to visualize the impact of a nuclear attack in the midst of our society.

Kansas City was chosen for a number of reasons as the focal point of our story: Kansas City is at the socio-cultural as well as geographic mid-point of the continental United States; in addition it is – as a consequence of the many missile silos in the area – one of the top 10 military targets in our country. Finally, Kansas was chosen because it is far removed from the headquarters of military and foreign policy, and the people who live there are not intimately connected with global tactics and maneuvering; rather they are concerned with their own jobs and responsibilities, much like the rest of us. In that sense, this film was made by and about such people.

Out imagery of nuclear war tends to be based – inevitably – on our experience of nuclear war, that of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, images which, in the light of new weapons systems technologies, are hopelessly out of date. "The Day After" attempts to correct this and show our citizens just what progress has been made, to give its viewers the opportunity to judge for themselves the pros and cons of the nuclear issue. One thing that film can do is to simulate a nuclear war, and there is a saying that one picture is worth a thousand words.

* * * * * * *

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THE DAY AFTER

...beyond imagining

WRITER'S MAJOR SOURCES OF RESEARCH

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VIDEOTAPES/FILMS

THE DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES, CBS Reports, Episode #1 (60 minutes).

FIRST STRIKE, KRON-TV, San Francisco (30 minutes).

THE LAST EPIDEMIC. THE MEDICAL CONSEQUENCES OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND NUCLEAR WAR, PSR (48 minutes).

THE WAR GAME, BBC/Peter Watkins (60 minutes).

THE DAY AFTER

...beyond imagining

The following suggested reading list compiled in cooperation with the American Library Association will provide additional information on a variety of subjects related to the nuclear issue.

Nuclear Madness,
by Dr. Helen Caldicott

On Thermonuclear War,
by Herman Kahn

Nuclear War Survival Skills,
by Dr. Cresson Kearney

Nuclear Weapons & Foreign Policy,
by Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

Indefensible Weapons: The Political & Psychological Case Against Nuclearism,
by Dr. Robert J. Lifton & Richard Falk

The Nuclear Question,
by Michael Mandelbaum

With Enough Shovels: Reagan, Bush & Nuclear War,
by Robert Sheer

The Fate of the Earth,
by Jonathan Schell

The Legacy of Hiroshima,
by Dr. Edward Teller

The Day After Midnight: The Effects of Nuclear War,
U.S. Office of Technology Assessment Staff.

Check your library or bookstores for these and other titles.

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THE DAY AFTER

NOVEMBER 20, 1983, ON THE ABC TELEVISION NETWORK

A VIEWER'S GUIDE BY CULTURAL INFORMATION SERVICE

The seventeenth century was the century of mathematics, the eighteenth that of the physical sciences and the nineteenth that of biology. Our twentieth century is the century of fear.

– Albert Camus, *Neither Victims Nor Executioners*

Since the first combat use of an atomic weapon at Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6, 1945, the peoples of the world have lived with the fears of the Nuclear Age. Deadly weapons loom over humanity like great clenched fists, shaping the character of nations and troubling international diplomacy. The threat of annihilation through nuclear war has influenced—consciously and unconsciously—entire generations, coloring their attitudes toward the future, family, marriage, work, time, leisure and death. For 38 years, people have asked, what will happen to us if there is a nuclear war?

On November 20, "The Day After," an ABC Theatre presentation, will depict the effects of a nuclear strike on Kansas City and the surrounding area. The story puts viewers in the middle of this community before, during and after a nuclear attack. The two-hour-and-fifteen-minute drama will begin at 8:00 pm ET on the ABC Television Network (check local listings for the channel, dates and times in your area).

"The Day After" was written by Edward Hume who spent six months researching the subject. Much of his scenario is based on a Congressional study by the United States Office of Technology Assessment titled "The Effects of Nuclear War." Mr. Hume consulted private and government agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, scientists and other specialists, and a former missile silo commander. The research surveyed most of the material currently available on the subject.

"The Day After" was directed by Nicholas Meyer and produced by Robert Papazian for ABC Circle Films. Jason Robards, JoBeth Williams, John Cullum, Bibi Besch, Steven Guttenberg, William Allen Young, John Lithgow, Lori Lethin and Calvin Jung head the large cast. Many citizens of Lawrence, Kansas, also participated in the filming.

ABOUT THIS VIEWER'S GUIDE

Everyone is opposed to nuclear war. Everyone wants to prevent the death, destruction, chaos and environmental havoc that a nuclear confrontation would bring to the earth. The mind recoils from contemplating the possibility of such a cataclysmic tragedy, and the emotions deny it.

Rather than talk about their nuclear anxieties, many adults try to avoid the subject altogether—especially around children. Yet fear of nuclear war so dominates our times, it cannot be avoided.

Research conducted under the auspices of the American Psychiatric Association reveals that at least 40 percent of American children have heard about nuclear weapons before age 12. Studies also report that many of these young people are deeply worried about the threat of nuclear annihilation. How do we deal with this pervasive fear?

Novelist Ignasio Silone observed how World War II refugees coped with their frightening situation and the possibility of annihilation: "What do you think refugees do from morning to night? They spend most of their time telling one another the stories of their lives. The stories are anything but amusing, but they tell them to one another really in an effort to make themselves understood. As long as there remains a determination to understand and to share one's understanding with others, perhaps we need not altogether despair."

Everyone who has lived with the nuclear threat has a story to tell. On this subject, there are no experts. "The Day After" offers viewers an opportunity to share their understanding of the Nuclear Age.

One of the best places to deal with fear is in the safe context of the home. Surrounded by a circle of family or friends, young and old alike can talk openly about their concerns.

The discussion questions in this Viewer's Guide are designed to help people prepare to experience "The Day After" and to focus their perceptions afterward. Many of the exercises use incidents in this fictional story to elicit the personal reactions of viewers.

Parents of young children will want to decide whether their family is ready for this type of dialogue. An on-air advisory by ABC at the beginning of the program states: "Although based on scientific fact, this film is fiction.

Because the graphic depiction of the effects of a nuclear war may not be suitable for younger viewers, parental discretion is advised." It is recommended that families watch the television program together and that children not watch alone.

For older children and adults, discussions about "The Day After" can become occasions to identify their deepest fears and voice their hopes for the future. By confronting the perils of nuclear war, individuals can come to terms with their fears and devise ways to transcend them. As psychologist Robert Jay Lifton has written: "The vision of death gives life. The vision of total annihilation makes it possible to imagine living under and beyond that curse."

THE STORY

While citizens in and around Kansas City go about their daily routines, television and radio news reports focus on an escalating crisis in Germany. Both NATO and Soviet spokesmen protest military buildups in the area. The tensions increase on Friday when a blockade of land and air access routes to West Berlin is imposed.

Dr. Russell Oakes (Jason Robards), a surgeon at Memorial General Hospital in Kansas City, listens to the news with growing concern. He and his wife, Helen (Georgann Johnson), recall their anxiety during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Saturday morning after surgery, he leaves for Lawrence, Kansas, 38 miles west of Kansas City, to teach a class at the University.

Airman First Class William McCoy (William Allen Young) is stationed at Whiteman Air Force Base in Sedalia, Missouri, and is assigned to a Minuteman missile silo at Sweetsage, 20 miles southeast of Kansas City. The site seems peaceful enough on Friday morning as Billy enters the area and waves to the Hendry family on the neighboring farm. That evening, however, he must say goodbye to his wife after the President of the United States orders all U.S. military personnel on a worldwide alert.

Jim Dahlberg (John Cullum), a dairy farmer, and his wife, Eve (Bibi Besch), are looking forward to the wedding on Sunday of their oldest daughter, Denise (Lori Lethin), to Bruce (Jeff East), a student at the University of Kansas at Lawrence. Alarmed by Friday night's events, Jim takes steps to prepare their cellar as a fallout shelter. His young son, Danny (Doug Scott), and daughter, Jolene (Ellen Anthony), help him stock it with water and canned goods.

At the University Hospital in Lawrence, Sam (Calvin Jung), a resident physician, examines freshman students including Stephen Klein (Steven Guttenberg), a pre-med major from Joplin, Missouri. Nurse Bauer (JoBeth Williams) comforts a pregnant woman, Allison (Amy Madigan).

Later Stephen and other students learn from a television report that NATO and Soviet forces have invaded East and West Germany and are engaged in a confrontation. At the local barbershop, Joe Huxley (John Lithgow), a professor, hopes that the conflict can be contained. He adds that the 150 missile sites in Missouri could be targets in a nuclear war.

These citizens' worst fears materialize when it is announced that nuclear weapons are being used by both sides in Europe. Radio bulletins over the Emergency Broadcast System now advise citizens to proceed to municipal shelters. At the stores, people panic and scramble for food and supplies.

In the U.S. Strategic Air Command's Airbourne Command Post, the order to launch American missiles is received. Procedures are followed in the underground silos.

Mrs. Hendry (Antonie Becker) is at her bedroom window when a missile is launched. Dr. Oakes is on the crowded highway to Lawrence. Stephen, hitchhiking home to Joplin, is alone on a country road. Billy McCoy arrives at the missile silo for duty only to discover that the weapon has been launched; he flees the scene. The Dahlbergs gather in their basement shelter. At the university, Joe and the students watch the Minuteman missiles in the distance and realize that Russian missiles could arrive within 30 minutes.

In Kansas City, chaos reigns. People rush into public shelters as air raid sirens blare on the streets. At 3:38 in the afternoon, a nuclear explosion occurs above the city. The first flash is followed by others across the horizon. Blasts, fires and heat devastate the city and the surrounding countryside.

Miraculously, the University Hospital in Lawrence still stands. It is the only place within 100 miles where the burned, injured and disoriented survivors can come for medical assistance. Dr. Oakes, having witnessed the

destruction of Kansas City from afar, arrives and takes over duty with Sam, Nurse Bauer and others. In the Basic Sciences Building, Joe sets up a shortwave radio which becomes the only means of communication in the area.

After wandering in the radioactive fallout, Stephen comes upon the Dahlberg farm and is allowed to enter their shelter. Billy joins hundreds of other victims on the road to Lawrence.

These individuals have managed to live through the devastation of a nuclear attack. Now they must cope with the terrifying aftermath: radiation sickness and virulent epidemics, inadequate means to care for the sick and to dispose of the dead, limited food and water supplies, outbreaks of violence and lawlessness. These physical hardships are compounded by the people's psychic numbness and feelings of hopelessness. With the world they knew destroyed, can they survive?

BEFORE VIEWING EXERCISES

Most people already have deep feelings about living in the Nuclear Age although they may not have expressed them. Before viewing "The Day After," it would be helpful to articulate your preconceptions and expectations.

1. Have you ever had a serious discussion about nuclear war? With whom? What was the occasion?

2. If you have not talked about nuclear war, why have you avoided the subject?

3. Complete this sentence: Whenever I try to talk about my feelings on nuclear war, what usually happens is _____.

4. When did you first learn about nuclear weapons? What has been your primary source of information about them?

5. Do you think you know enough about nuclear technology to form an opinion about its implications? Do you want to learn more about this subject? Which aspect?

6. What book, film, television program, song, magazine article or newspaper report has most shaped your views on nuclear war? Explain.

7. If another world war were to break out, do you think nuclear weapons would be used? Do you think you and your family could survive a nuclear war?

8. Complete: My greatest fear about the Nuclear Age is _____.

9. Some people say that Americans worry about too many things which may never come to pass. Do you agree or disagree? Discuss.

10. Do you believe you as an individual citizen can help determine your country's future? How?

AFTER VIEWING EXERCISES

Discussions on the Story

In an early scene in "The Day After," Dr. Oakes and his daughter (Kyle Aletter) visit an art museum. Looking at a painting of a Chinese landscape, she explains: "Sometimes it's hard to know how to experience a Chinese landscape because the artist doesn't tell you where you are watching from. You know why? Because he wants you to be in the landscape, a part of it, not out here looking at it."

The following questions are derived from incidents in "The Day After" and reactions of the characters. By moving beyond "looking at" these scenes to "being part of them" through discussion, we can gain a larger understanding of what the Nuclear Age signifies to us all.

1. Should developments in the escalating military situation in Germany have convinced citizens in the Kansas City area that a war was imminent? How much attention do you pay to military conflicts overseas? When was the last time you followed the details of an international crisis out of concern for your own safety and the well being of your loved ones? How did you act?

2. At what point in the two days prior to the attack would you have abandoned business-as-usual and taken a protective course of action for your family? If you had warning of an impending disaster, what would you do?

3. Helen Oakes tells her husband that their neighbors have left for Mexico. In the event of a nuclear war between major powers, would any place in the world be "safe"?

4. What do you know about the mission and operations of the United States Strategic Air Command? How is its chain of command organized? What would be SAC's role during a nuclear war?

5. If you asked the Hendrys, the farmers living next door to the missile silo, why they did not move from such a dangerous location, how do you think they would

answer? Do you understand people who say that they would rather not survive a nuclear attack?

6. At first, Eve Dahlberg refuses to take the national emergency seriously. How do you explain her behavior? Have you ever reacted to a stressful situation in a similar manner? Give an example.

7. The United States and the Soviet Union both deny that "launch on warning" is official policy. How is this strategy defined in the film? What problems are inherent in the assumption that the nation must, as Joe explains it, "use them or lose them"?

8. With which character do you most identify in the early scenes of the film? What does he or she symbolize to you? With whom do you identify in the second half of the film? Why?

9. Share your reactions to the scenes of the launching of the Minuteman missiles from their underground silos. What adjectives would you use to describe these moments? Were you surprised by your response?

10. "The war is over," Billy asserts at the empty missile silo. What does he mean? Do you agree with his interpretation? If you were in his situation, would you follow orders to remain on alert?

11. What are "EMP (electro magnetic pulse) effects," which are depicted and defined in "The Day After"? What steps are now being taken to prevent a disruption of power in the event of a nuclear explosion in the earth's atmosphere?

12. Danny Dahlberg asks his father the purpose of shoveling dirt over the basement windows. Later, as the family waits in their shelter, Jolene asks, "What's radiation?" Could you answer her question? Do you think it is important for people today to be informed about the effects of radiation? Would you, for example, know how to measure radiation and when it was safe to go outside?

13. In the 1950s and 1960s, when many citizens were building fallout shelters, debates were conducted and sermons preached on whether or not one should allow a stranger into a shelter. Would you admit Stephen to your shelter? Give reasons why or why not.

14. The doctors at the hospital and the students in the science building must adapt quickly to emergency procedures and makeshift equipment. What practical talents and knowledge do you possess that would make you an asset in a time of crisis? What survival skills have you developed?

15. The hospital personnel attempt to ascertain the extent to which individuals have been exposed to radiation. What are the symptoms of radiation sickness?

16. Dr. Oakes wonders why his life was spared, explaining to Nurse Bauer that it was an accident that he was not in Kansas City. Do you think events in your life are predetermined? Has your attitude on this question influenced your perceptions of the future?

17. Allison tells Dr. Oakes: "We knew the score. We knew all about bombs. We knew all about fallout. We knew this could happen for 40 years. Nobody was interested." Oakes does not argue with her. Would you?

18. The survivors witness death on a massive scale. What has most influenced your attitudes toward death? (a) family and friends, (b) introspection and meditation, (c) religious values, (d) books, television or films, (e) other.

19. Cite incidents in the story that demonstrate the "will to survive." At one point, Allison asks Dr. Oakes to explain why he works so hard at the hospital. How do you account for the medical staff's tireless efforts?

20. How do you evaluate the President's message to the survivors? What is the subtext of his statement? Is this the kind of speech you would want to hear from the President under such circumstances?

21. One student expects the President to reveal who started the war. Would this issue matter to you? Would your determination to survive the aftermath of a nuclear war depend upon your knowledge of who won? Explain.

22. Of all the institutions which presently constitute American society, which one(s) would be best suited to handle a postwar society and its manifold problems? Which groups take control in "The Day After"?

23. Which scenes in the story reveal the hostile, territorial and aggressive aspects of human behavior? Do you agree with anthropologist Konrad Lorenz who maintains that there is a "killer instinct" in humans?

24. A food line turns into an angry mob when supplies are exhausted. Have you ever been in a group that became a mob? How did you behave? Do you think the survivors in "The Day After" who commit violent acts or engage in looting should be judged by traditional standards of morality?

25. Do you believe that in spite of everything people are basically good at heart? In *Caring*, Willard Gaylin argues that the capacity for caring is programmed in

human nature and that the paradigm for this impulse is the mother-infant relationship, a loving response to helplessness. Does "The Day After" support this premise?

26. What is the Scriptural text for the minister's message to his tattered and beleaguered congregation? How do you interpret his sermon? What role do you think your religious beliefs would play in helping you cope with the effects of a nuclear war?

27. Representatives of the National Emergency Reconstruction Administration lecture the farmers about detoxifying their soil. Are their suggestions practical in your opinion? Do you think the farmers will be able to salvage their resources for the country at large?

28. How do you interpret the birth of the baby? Do you regard it as a sign of hope?

29. What problems are depicted in "The Day After" that no people in history have faced before?

30. Discuss this thought by author James Baldwin in the context of the last scene of the film: "The moment we cease to hold each other, the moment we break faith with one another, the sea engulfs us and the light goes out."

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

The following projects and exercises grow out of viewing "The Day After." Some are expanded considerations of topics mentioned in the story; others cover subjects beyond the purview of the drama. All fulfill the intentions of this Viewer's Guide—sharing our stories of living in the Nuclear Age.

1. Faced with the prospect of imminent war, Russell and Ellen Oakes reminisce about another "close call," the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. They recall President John F. Kennedy on television "telling Khrushchev to turn his boats around" and talking about a "full retaliatory response." To many Americans, this incident remains a key memory of the nuclear threat.

What specific incidents led to the Cuban Missile Crisis? Do you remember where you were when you first heard about the escalating tensions? Do you recall television newscasters with maps indicating how every major American city except Seattle could be destroyed by Cuban missiles? At the time, did you think the incident would evolve into an all-out nuclear war?

How did your community react to the crisis? How did your family? Did people reconsider the need for fallout shelters and evacuation routes? Did your church or synagogue hold a prayer vigil? Did any positive steps toward world peace result from this crisis?

2. Saturday morning at the hospital in Kansas City, Dr. Oakes listens as a colleague reports, "There is a rumor they are evacuating Moscow. There are even people leaving Kansas City because of the missile bases . . . We are not talking about Hiroshima anymore. Hiroshima was peanuts."

The first combat use of an atomic weapon was at Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6, 1945. The United States dropped a second atomic bomb at Nagasaki, Japan, on August 9, 1945. Is the doctor correct when he implies that today's nuclear weapons are far more powerful than those bombs? Using resources suggested in the bibliography, research the casualties and the problems of survivors in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. You may also want to read accounts by survivors. *Children of the A-Bomb, The Testament of the Boys and Girls of Hiroshima* by Arata Osada (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1959) contains the oral histories of Japanese who were junior high school students in 1945. *Unforgettable Fire* compiled by Japan Broadcasting Corporation (New York: Pantheon, 1981) reproduces pictures drawn by atomic bomb survivors with their personal testimonies.

What were the immediate and long-term effects of radioactive fallout and radiation in the two cities? What similarities do you see in the lives of the survivors

depicted in "The Day After" and those who lived through Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

Some analysts contend that the recovery of the two Japanese cities indicates that communities can be rebuilt after a nuclear strike. Others point out a critical difference between the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and a future nuclear holocaust: in the event of a full scale nuclear confrontation today, it is likely there would be no functioning "outside world" to provide medical assistance and psychological support for survivors. Discuss these two points of view.

3. Watching the Dahlbergs retreat to their basement shelter will remind many viewers of their experiences with civil defense programs in the 1950s and 1960s. Today's youth may need to be reminded that they are not the first generation forced to deal with fears about nuclear war.

Do you remember ducking under your desk at school and avoiding looking out the window? Did your class line up and march out of the room into the corridors or to the basement? Did you practice sitting on the floor with your back to the wall and your head between your knees? How did you respond to these exercises at the time? How do you regard them now? What effect did the drills have upon your view of the future and your appreciation of the present? Did you believe in the need for fallout shelters?

4. Does your community have a civil defense plan? What are its key provisions? Hold a public hearing to discuss whether the plan is feasible.

Research and report on the components of the Reagan Administration's Civil Defense Program for the 1980s.

5. Organize a "Nuclear Age" film festival. *Nuclear War Films* edited by Jack Shaheen (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978) describes 24 movies which cover all aspects of this topic. Information on rentals or purchases of the films is also included.

Supplement film screenings with guest lectures, book reports and other studies. In this context, groups may also share reactions to "The Day After," the recent TV mini-series "World War III," and the 1983 summer feature film *War Games*.

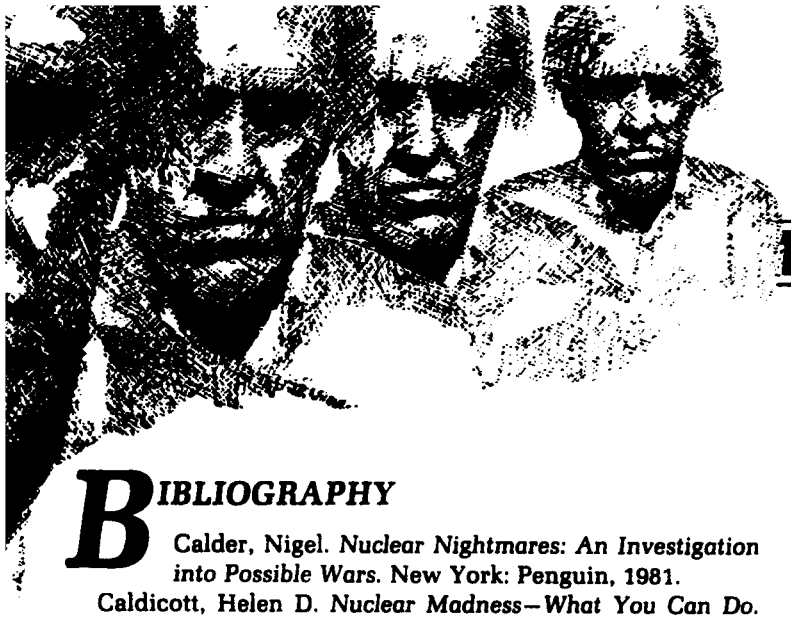
6. In his novel *The World According To Garp*, John Irving writes: "If Garp could have been granted one vast and naive wish, it would have been that he could make the world safe. For children and grownups. The world struck Garp as unnecessarily perilous for both." How can you help make the world safe?

7. "The Day After" ends with the following statement: "It is hoped that the images of this film will inspire the nations of this earth, their peoples and leaders, to find the means to avert the fateful day." Research the various strategies which have been proposed by citizens and their leaders to prevent the use of nuclear weapons. Then discuss how you individually can participate in the ongoing effort to secure world peace.

The future is not a result of choices among alternative paths offered by the present, but a place that is created—created first in mind and will, created next in activity.

The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination.

— John Schaar, University of California at Santa Cruz



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This Viewer's Guide to "The Day After" was prepared by Cultural Information Service (CIStems, Inc.), an independent nonprofit educational organization and publisher of a magazine for lifelong learners, TV Viewers' Guides and other resources. Directors: Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat. Designer: Rudy Michael. The development and distribution of this Viewer's Guide were made possible by ABC Community Relations.

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To comment on the television film "The Day After," write Jane Paley, Director, ABC Community Relations, 1330 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10019.

Stopping [illegible] for Europe

·NUCLEAR· TIMES

Sunday

8 PM

Bruce Dern. Colonel Moses: Charlton Heston. Pam: Florence Henderson.

7 **MOVIE (P)—Drama**
"The Day After" (Made for TV. 1983). America's Midwest destroyed by nuclear attack. Can the anti-nuclear weapons movement make sure that millions get the message? (135 min.) Dr. Oakes: Jason Robards

9 **DEATH VALLEY DAYS (R)—**
rama
TWILIGHT ZONE (R)—Drama
—STERPIECE THEATRE—
ome"—Part LXII.

THE BOMB IT'S PRIME TIME

The Day After" Controversy

ORGANIZING FOR THE "DAY AFTER"

Will Millions Get The Message?

On the evening of November 20, just four days before a thankful America sits down to turkey dinners, tens of millions of people will be gathering around television sets in livingrooms, churches and town halls—not to enjoy a heartwarming holiday special, but to watch Kansas City get blown off the face of the earth.

At 8 o'clock on that Sunday evening, ABC plans to air what many believe is the most controversial television movie ever made—*The Day After*. Directed by Nicholas Meyer, and starring Jason Robards, the $7 million film grimly—and at great length—depicts World War III, focusing on America's heartland and the losing battle for survival by those unlucky enough to live through a nuclear war.

Airing on the eve of the planned deployment of American nuclear missiles in Europe, *The Day After*—despite ABC's assertions that the film advocates no political philosophy—is being viewed by many as a timely commercial for the anti-nuclear movement. The film dramatizes two points peace activists have long been making: that the deterrence theory is dangerous and that no one will survive a nuclear war. (*For a summary and review of* The Day After, *see page 15.*) After a slow start, peace activists are now planning both local and national strategies to ensure that the public not only tunes in to the movie, but into the movement as well.

The Bomb hits home: Jason Robards and Georgann Johnson minutes before the end

Right-wing groups are paying attention, too; their accusation that ABC is peddling Soviet propaganda is adding to the controversy surrounding the film. As Theo Brown, deputy director of Ground Zero in Washington, D.C., says, "My organizer's nose tells me that this movie is going to create one helluva hullabaloo, and we better plan on being there for the duration."

FROM SHOPPING CENTERS TO CONGRESS

Most antinuclear groups are concentrating on grass-roots organizing, encouraging outreach through group viewings. "No one should see this film alone—not kids, not adults," says Wendy Roberts, a California social worker. "It should be watched in the framework of group support."

Ground Zero plans to print 200,000 *Day After* guides to help "walk" viewers through the movie and subsequent discussions. The guides will be sent to schools, churches and community groups; and members plan to distribute them in shopping centers during the busy pre-holiday weekend when the film airs, thereby reaching many non-activist shoppers. A special toll-free number is being set up by activists in New York and Washington, D.C., to match callers with peace groups. Members of Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) throughout the United States will write to their local Chambers of Commerce for lists of mainstream community groups. "Then we'll write to them and say, 'If you saw the movie and want to get involved, we're here to show you how,' " explains Abram Claude, PSR's associate director.

Susan Alexander with Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR) is assembling a *Day After* guide with specific suggestions for discussions people can have after seeing the film. And the Center for Defense Information in Washington, D.C., is trying to place ads for their "nuclear war prevention kit" on dozens of ABC stations immediately following the film.

STOP Nuclear War in Northfield, Massachusetts, hopes to flood the White House and offices of all elected officials with letters saying, "I'm watching *The Day After*; I hope you do the same." And, in an effort to supplement a national media campaign, SANE, together with the freeze campaign, is sending thousands of activists packets containing a how-to manual for putting together viewing groups, suggestions for doing local press work around the movie, and material urging activists to get out into their communities during the week following the film. Says Randy Kehler, national coordinator of the freeze, "This movie has given us a fantastic opportunity for growth—

TV Guides

The Day After *The Day After*, special edition of the Educators for Social Responsibility newsletter. Available for $1.50 from: Educators for Social Responsibility, 23 Garden St, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Ground Zero's Viewing Guide, free, from: Ground Zero, 806 15 St NW, No. 421, Washington, D.C. 20005.

***The Day After*—A Viewer's Guide**, by Cultural Information Service, free, while supplies last, from: CIS—The Day After, PO Box 786, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159.

The SANE/Freeze Day After Project, free, from: Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign National Clearinghouse, 4144 Lindell Blvd, Ste 404, St. Louis, MO 63108.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ABC
ILLUSTRATIONS BY LIANE FRIED

now it's up to us to run with it."

The Day After has sparked considerable interest on Capitol Hill as well. "It produced the single most emotional response I've ever had to a movie," says Representative Edward Markey. And Representative Thomas Downey is planning a *Day After* conference for his constituents, and will open up his district office for phone calls on the night the movie airs.

WAKING THE MOVEMENT

Josh Baran, a publicist based in Berkeley, California, is finishing a marathon run with *The Day After*. Months ago he dreamed up a project called Target Kansas City; that, along with a sister project, Let Lawrence Live (Lawrence, 40 miles from Kansas City, is where the film's nuclear war survivors struggle with radiation sickness and social entropy), promises to be at the center of public attention when *The Day After* airs. Organizers there have planned midnight vigils, public rallies, press conferences, forums, and town hall meetings with local congressional representatives. "After the movie, a lot of Americans will be looking to us out here to see what we're thinking and doing," says Allen Hanson, director of Let Lawrence Live. "You can count on us to make a hell of a lot of noise."

Baran, who traveled across the country last summer urging movement groups to use the film as an organizing tool, wants to hear a clamor from coast to coast. "I've been working full-time on getting the movement awakened to the movie," he says. "It's taken a *long* time. For four months I was a lone voice crying in the wilderness. People in the peace movement are ignorant about the media; they have no understanding of how it works and how to use it. They'd rather spend a quarter of a million dollars on a documentary that no one will see than grab the opportunity that *The Day After* presents." However, once ABC announced the November 20 air-date for the film in September, Baran says, antinuclear groups began to get involved in the event.

Previews of the movie also contributed to a sudden increase in movement activity. "We heard about the movie last June, but it was only after seeing it that we began intense work and made it a top priority," says ESR's Susan Alexander. "*The Day After* is very powerful," says PSR's Abram Claude. "After seeing it, I realized that it makes what we're trying to say to the public much more real. It really gets to the heart of the matter."

However, Claude, Alexander, and a number of other organizers are concerned about the film's limitations—limitations that Baran freely admits.

"The movie is a passive-depressive experience and offers no sense of hope or idea about what you can do," Baran says. "That's why it's imperative for groups to relay the message that nuclear war *is* preventable. Groups should get representatives on talk shows the day after the movie. They should hit the newspapers and magazines. Get out there and tell the public what they can do."

BEFORE THE DELUGE

That is precisely the premise of a project based in Emeryville, California, called The Day Before. Director Wendy Roberts, backed by 12 national organizations, has arranged community gatherings in over 100 locations throughout the United States for the Monday and Tuesday nights following the Sunday night movie to show people that nuclear war is preventable—if they work on it.

"Talking about nuclear fear is almost as taboo as talking about sex once was," Roberts observes. "*The Day After* provides us with an opportunity to break that taboo. We can finally begin to confront what we all know is out there."

The Day Before project is focusing on the mainstream. Field organizers throughout the United States have been instructed to make sure that non-activists comprise at least half of the participants at Day Before gatherings. "We're going after the mainstream people who love their kids, their lives, and their country, and who don't want to see it all blown up," says Roberts. Day Before gatherings are planned for YWCAs, garden clubs, churches, and, in one town in Virginia, the local firehouse. All of these people, Roberts says, must be shown that nuclear war is not inevitable. "After we deal with their responses to the film," Roberts says, "we want to get them active. We want them to take their heads out of the sand and do whatever they can do to help."

Janet Michaud, with the Campaign for

AIRING DIFFERENCES

Right After "The Day After"

"If conservatives have the sense God gave a jackrabbit, they will get busy now on plans to lay down a counterbarrage." Thus spake William Rusher, publisher of the *National Review*, in a syndicated column appearing in 700 newspapers and magazines in mid-September. Charging that *The Day After* amounts to nothing less than Soviet propaganda, Rusher called on the Young Americans for Freedom, Phyllis Schlafly "and her troops," and several other mainstay right-wing organizations to get busy.

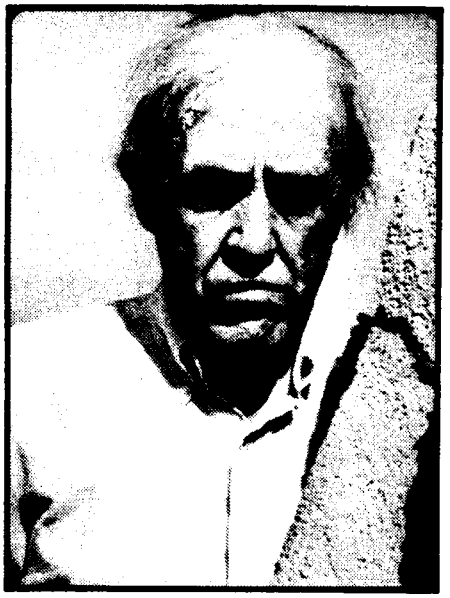
Rusher's rallying cry to the right garnered some immediate support. The *New York Post* ran a column celebrating the film's lack of advertising support followed by an editorial, based on Rusher's article, entitled "Why is ABC Doing Yuri Andropov's Job?" Conservative groups have mounted a campaign (that includes writing dissuasive letters to potential commercial sponsors of the film) countering what they see as a dangerous attack on deterrence.

"In airing *The Day After* ABC is fanning the flames of revolt," says Paul Dietrich, director of the Fund for a Conservative Majority in Washington, D.C. Dietrich believes that the film's political position—if only by omission—plays into the hands of the antinuclear movement. "I know that ABC says the movie is not political," Dietrich says, "but indirectly it undermines our government and all our symbols of authority. It depicts the breakdown of a policy [deterrence] that has in fact kept us out of nuclear war for 38 years. It makes a liar out of every administration since World War II." And Dietrich contends that the network's decision to air the film just weeks before the planned deployment of the first American cruise and Pershing 2 missiles in Europe is "an irresponsible ploy to exploit an explosive situation of international politics," adding that ABC is simply hoping to "cash in on all the controversy."

Dietrich, who in his organizing efforts has been in touch with the White House, veterans' groups, and other "responsible Americans," says he hopes ABC will give his side fair representation. His efforts, he says, will be focused on getting the right's point of view on the special ABC news program following the movie. Dietrich expects few problems; network executives have met with conservative leaders over lunch to arrange private previews of the film.

Robert Dolan, the national chairman of the Young Americans for Freedom, is busy organizing in Lawrence, Kansas, helped by a chapter of his group at the University of Kansas. Tentative plans have been made for a counter-vigil at the ABC affiliate in Kansas City, and Dolan intends to hold numerous press conferences. Laying down an effective counterbarrage, however, will not be easy because, as Paul Dietrich observes, "the other side is so much better funded and organized."

—Renata Rizzo



Robards: In a movement commercial?

Nuclear Disarmament in Washington, D.C., hopes to make that first step toward action as simple as picking up a phone. Michaud is finalizing plans to set up a toll-free "800" number anyone can call in the days and weeks following *The Day After*. Callers will then be hooked up to local peace groups and the national antinuclear movement. The number will be advertised in national and local newspapers, and on radio shows, television, and billboards.

But one Washington, D.C., activist already sees problems arising over this area of outreach strategy. "The movie is like a giant rally," he observes, "and we'll all be trying to get the people who come to the rally to join *our* group. Who gets first whack at the names for direct mail membership drives? There are, unfortunately, questions of turf here."

Michaud says that the names will be made available to any group that wants them. But, as one New York organizer points out, "If the list goes to everyone, we'll have chaos. If people start getting letters from four or five different groups, we could end up killing their good intentions with kindness."

Despite the problems raised by such an ambitious media campaign, Michaud believes that the effectiveness of the antinuclear effort depends on this project and others like it. "There is a lack of understanding and commitment to using serious media as outreach in the peace movement," Michaud says. "And there's good reason for it. Organizers are out in the trenches, and they *should* be there. But we've all got to understand that the union of the peace movement and the media is the perfect marriage." Of course, the chronic shortage of capital in the peace movement has severely limited its mass media outreach. That's why Jenny Russell of Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament in Arlington, Massachusetts, feels that *The Day After* (which cost the movement nothing to produce) is so important. "In order to make a difference, the disarmament movement has got to start talking numbers," Russell says, "and for numbers, TV is the way to go."

SAVING THE TITANIC

Not everyone is sure that they *want* to go with *The Day After*. Although the Lawyer's Alliance in Boston is arranging group viewings and working to get members on talk shows in the days following the film, Gail Gallessich, the group's director of public relations, has misgivings about it. "The movie does not address the fact that there are alternatives to the arms race," she explains. "There are no activist role models in the film. It is so negative that if we become overly associated with it, it may backfire on us."

Organizers from Educators for Social Responsibility are concerned about the movie's effect on children, and are recommending that no one under the age of 12 sees it; as Susan Alexander half-jokingly puts it, "They should be torn away from the TV and tied to their beds." (Some organizers, however, fear that if such protective impulses are overly publicized, this may unwittingly play into the hands of right-wing groups who are making the related—but broader—claim that the movie will terrify *all* Americans.)

Leslie Cagan of Mobilization for Survival in New York wonders how to get *The Day After* out of the context of despair and move it into the context of politics. But Josh Baran maintains that it is precisely the movement's job to charge the atmosphere around the movie and turn it into a political event. "We must be there to move people through the experience, catch them the day after *The Day After*," Baran says. "But we've got to stop futzing around here; this is not Never Never Land. We're on the Titanic, and we have to do all we can to break into the control room and turn the ship around. We can't wait around forever for the perfect movie," Baran adds. "We don't have the time."

Whatever the movie's failings, the fact remains that ABC has spent $7 million on what amounts to a powerful indictment of nuclear weapons. Watching people die from radiation sickness can never be a pleasant experience, but when viewed in the context of responsible support groups, *The Day After* could prove to be a landmark political and educational event for the nation. As Jenny Russell said, after leaving a preview of the film, "I kept wondering, 'how can anyone be expected to watch this?' and yet knowing that this is one movie everyone *must* see."

—Renata Rizzo

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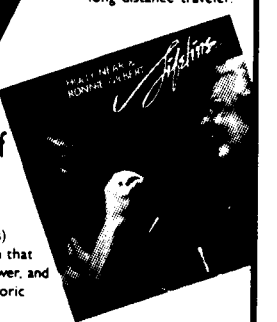

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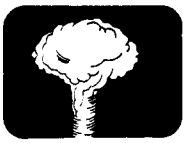


The Pentagon was almost as deeply involved in the buildup to the fictional *The Day After* as it is in real-life nuclear war planning.

Top military officials demanded script approval before they would allow the filmmakers to use government equipment or facilities. The filmmakers acceded to some demands, but two weeks before shooting began last fall in Lawrence, Kansas, cooperation with the Pentagon broke down. The Pentagon wanted a more positive vision of a postnuclear civil defense operation and a more malevolent portrayal of the Soviets.

Both producer Robert Papazian and director Nicholas Meyer initially sought out the Pentagon's expertise to improve the film's accuracy. They also showed staff experts at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) several versions of the script, which were revised to include certain government suggestions about technical details and terminology.

But pressure from the Pentagon to make substantive changes intensified as the start of shooting approached. "Every time we changed the script they extended their requests," Meyer says. "For example, an agronomist comes to advise what's remaining of the community on postnuclear planting. Our information came out of a government pamphlet.

"The Pentagon insisted that the pamphlet was out of date and we must use the new one. But a new theory on postnuclear cultivation is not necessarily any more accurate than the one published a month before.

"At one point we even included a speech they suggested which called on everyone to pull together and make the best of the situation." (This scene was later cut.) Nevertheless the Pentagon remained dissatisfied with the film's portrayal of civil defense, since it paints a bleaker picture than that envisioned by the Reagan administration.

"When we first saw the script in the spring of '82 we found many things which would have made them [ABC] a laughing stock, so we made a list of suggested corrections," says Colonel Conrad Gonzales of the Pentagon's Directorate of Emergency Planning. "Then we took them on tours of Vandenberg and Whiteman missile bases in July. At the time the script was very, very fluid and constant changes were being made."

That summer ABC asked for permission to use the Forbes Field Air Force base in Kansas for certain scenes. "With the new request," says Gonzales, "we had to look at the script again because there would be questions about Defense Department cooperation. The script needed to give an accurate representation of the current policy of the NATO alliance and of the U.S. towards deployment and early warning. And at the time I saw the script it did not."

Meyer interpreted the Pentagon's comments as pressure to introduce political bias to the story. "Our ability to work with the Pentagon really began to break down as it became clear they wanted conditions which tended towards the idea that the Russians started the war," he says. "In the end we decided that we did not need the cooperation of the Pentagon that much. Rather than twisting ourselves into a pretzel, it was easier and cheaper to rent our own helicopter, paint it Air Force white and use stock footage."

FEMA spokesman Jim Holton, who saw two revised versions of the script a year ago, says that at that point it contained several technical inaccuracies and scenes that were included purely for visual effect. "Our scientists say several of the scenes could not happen—for instance, a telephone pole bursting into flames," Holton explains. Holton, however, admits that the whole subject of civil defense is "full of 'ifs'. And the government has produced many documents and pamphlets that are more definitively written than they deserve to be. Our experts are only experts to the extent that one can be about something that has

ACTING THE PART

Preparing For The Final Scene

Lori Lethin is the young actress who suffers gruesome physical and emotional trauma as Denise Dahlberg, the 19-year-old bride-to-be in *The Day After*. Denise's marital plans are destroyed when a nuclear bomb hits Kansas City on her wedding day. Instead of marching down the aisle, Denise and the surviving members of her wealthy farming family take refuge in their basement after the bombs fall.

Wanting to maintain the basic naiveté of her character, who is totally involved in her wedding plans and her fiancé (who dies in the nuclear attack), Lethin avoided becoming very familiar with the consequences of nuclear fallout. However, she viewed documentary films and photographs of the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and read books provided for the cast by ABC. Lethin found it hard, she says, to capture "a certain look in the survivors' eyes. They were alive on the outside with their bodies functioning, but their eyes looked as though they were dead inside."

Playing Denise was physically taxing for Lethin, who underwent three hours of makeup each day to simulate the effects of radiation sickness. Lethin starts her decline looking like "death warmed over," as she puts it, with 40 percent of her hair gone and numerous sores and burns. Her final makeup effect—bald, cracked lips, brown teeth, red-rimmed eyes and sores and burns everywhere—was so terrifying that small children would run away in horror when they saw her in costume on the street between scenes. Scaring the children was the most difficult thing for Lethin because she has a 17-month-old daughter herself.

The role and filming of the movie were marked by a constant sense of unreality, according to Lethin. "It was hard to watch some of the scenes I'd been in," she says, "I was barely able to see the final scene in which Steven Guttenberg [who joins the Dahlberg family in their basement] is searching for me in this huge gym filled with thousands of survivors."

Lethin says that before filming began she was very much like the character she plays—"basically unaware" about nuclear issues. But after playing a nuclear victim, Lethin notes a definite change. "I'd do anything I could," she says, "to help enlighten people about the threat of nuclear war."

—Gina Lobaco

never happened."

A six-month delay in the screening of the film—it was originally slated to be aired last spring—and subsequent editing, which reduced its length by one hour, sparked allegations in the press that the network was bowing to censorship pressure from the Reagan administration. Meyer and Papazian deny the rumors. *The Day After*, Meyer explains, was originally written and shot to be shown over two nights with many commercial breaks. Meyer, who did most of the editing, says the network originally wanted the longer version to allow for 30 minutes of commercials. "They told me they couldn't afford to lose too much on this movie," Meyer explains, "so the padded version was prepared to accommodate the advertising. When ABC's New York executives saw it they decided a tighter format would make for a better film. Then we spent all summer taking it apart." Now the film will be shown with all commercial breaks occurring in the first half, before the Bomb explodes. Concerning the "censorship" issue Meyer now says: "All I know is that ABC wants it to get more press than *The Winds of War*."

Although Meyer was satisfied with the film (as of late-September), he was still worried that ABC might make changes in the final weeks of editing. One of the more shocking scenes has already been cut, he says, following criticisms by a child psychologist who judged the episode to be too disturbing.

Meyer: Resisting pressure for changes

But the man who wrote the script, Edward Hume, sees no softening of the film in its depiction of the hopelessness of surviving a nuclear strike. When ABC first approached him with an idea about a movie on nuclear war, "they did not have any hard notions about the scenario," Hume says. "They just wanted to deal seriously with the issue. They wanted to show what might happen if this country were hit." When asked how ABC originally framed the proposal for the movie, Hume recalls, "Their major concern was that it should not alienate any segment of the population. But that is not to say that I do not want this film to have a political impact."

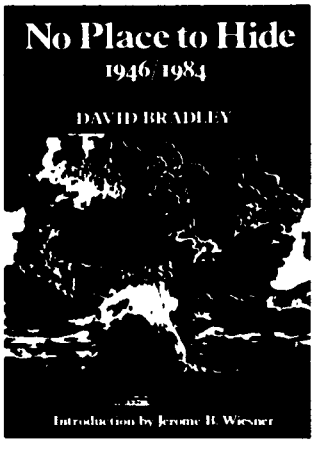
After doing research for the script, Hume concluded that there was "no effective way to deal with the consequences of a nuclear strike. The people at FEMA are pretty confused about the whole thing themselves as far as I can see."

What political message will viewers receive from this film? "Many people will draw different political conclusions," Hume says. "This film is a mirror and people will see what they want in it." And Meyer adds, "It doesn't advocate any particular position; it just shows in pictures that nuclear war is horrible."

Asked if he viewed the timing of the screening as ironic, coming just a few weeks before the deployment of Pershing 2 missiles in West Germany, Meyer said, "The timing would always be ironic because there's always some new issue or development emerging in the nuclear arena, and that's been the case ever since Hiroshima." **—Judith Dudley**

Judith Dudley is a Washington correspondent for the Center for Investigative Reporting.

"A very important book"—**Helen Caldicott**, President, Physicians for Social Responsibility



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THE REAL DAY AFTER

Film Rebuts Postwar Visions

It certainly isn't intended to be, but *The Day After* can be viewed as a dramatic argument in favor of the civil defense planning now limping along at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Central to that planning is crisis relocation. "There is nothing quite so helpful," FEMA explains, "as being, say, 10 miles or more away from a nuclear weapon when it goes off." Gazing upon *The Day After*'s representation of Kansas City after the Bomb, the viewer might well agree.

The prewar crisis that unfolds in the film is both extended and threatening, yet crisis relocation is never ordered. Early on, Dr. Russell Oakes (Jason Robards) and his wife discuss some neighbors who, on their own initiative, have decamped to Guadalajara with their dog and Vietnamese maid. The Oakeses have a good laugh about this. Better they should have gone to Guadalajara.

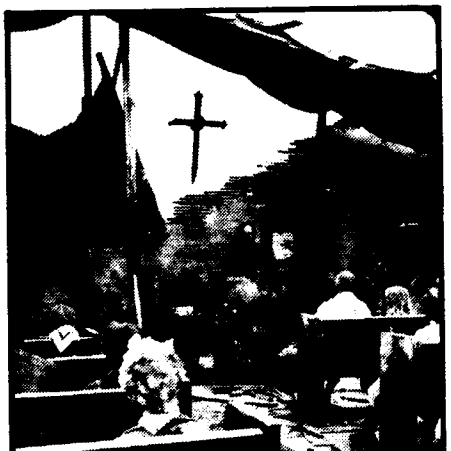
When nuclear attack finally appears imminent, there is a chaotic *spontaneous* evacuation of Kansas City, which presents another argument for crisis relocation planning. If people are going to evacuate anyway, why not have a plan to smooth things along? (The film's evacuation is marked by accidents and traffic jams but remains curiously orderly in one regard: The interstate highway out of Kansas City is all jammed up on the outbound side, but nobody is traveling in the inbound lanes. Surely, in the face of imminent death, people would drive on the wrong side of the median.)

The argument against crisis relocation, of course, is that, in the long run, it will do you no good. If you don't die now, the argument goes, you will die later. If the Bomb doesn't get you in Kansas City, then the fallout will get you in Podunk, or the famine will, or the epidemic will, or the looters will, or the ozone depletion will. This is apparently the view of the film's director, Nicholas Meyer, who has said, "Not everyone dies on camera, but the clear implication is that no one, not even Jason Robards, is going to survive."

But the film indicates otherwise.

Jason Robards clearly is on his last legs at film's end, but he has by that time survived for weeks, laboring heroically at a Kansas hospital that must be downwind of a considerable number of detonations. We are told at one point early on that fallout in the area is emitting 50 rads an hour and holding steady. This is enough to give almost anyone out in the open a lethal dose in less than half a day. The walls of an ordinary hospital (or any other building) offer some radiation protection, but not enough to enable Robards and his colleagues to work for *weeks* with no visible ill effects except exhaustion and hair loss. Yet they do. And Robards' colleagues, so far as we know, never even get sick. (Nor do they get hungry. Even FEMA realizes that food distribution will be difficult after a nuclear war, but Robards' hospital seems to have plenty.)

A somewhat more realistic survival story is that of farmer Jim Dahlberg and his family. The Dahlbergs, who also seem to escape radiation sickness, are at least shown to have taken shelter in their basement. Their continued good health ascribes more protection to that shelter than an ordinary basement would actually afford. But it does reflect the idea—often emphasized by FEMA—that people inside shelters will be better off than people outside them.



Life After Wartime: How close to reality?

The only Dahlberg to get sick is their eldest daughter, who runs outside in a fit of panic and stumbles around for a while in a fallout-laden field (where she trips over a dead cow) before being hauled back inside. The daughter later falls fatally ill, an unlikely consequence of a few minutes exposure, considering the good health of the rest of the family.

Like all the film's radiation victims she proceeds toward death rather decorously. She bleeds some and loses lots of hair (hair loss is the film's dominant visual motif) but she—and we viewers—are spared the vomiting and seizures that are also symptoms of fatal radiation sickness.

As for farmer Dahlberg, he stays healthy to the end—when he is shot by a refugee. And here the film is very convincing. The picture it paints of postattack social disintegration—food riots, looters, firing squads—seems an inevitable consequence of massive nuclear war. And the film's nuclear war is massive. We witness the launching of what appear to be every Minuteman missile at Whiteman Air Force Base (east of Kansas City) *before* any Soviet weapons have arrived. This indicates, an airman explains, either that the United States has struck first or that it has launched under attack. Either way, the war is all-out. *The Day After* has simply—and wisely—ignored all the popular think-tank scenarios for limited strategic nuclear war.

It has ignored, as well, the elaborate federal plans for postattack recovery. The only appearance in the film of federal planners or plans is at a meeting between Missouri farmers and representatives of the "National Emergency Reconstruction Administration" (apparently modeled on the Office of Defense Resources, which is supposed to supplant FEMA after a nuclear war). The government men advise the farmers to decontaminate their fields and plant ultraviolet-resistant crops (to resist the extra ultraviolet radiation that will be reaching the earth as a result of the atmospheric ozone depletion that may be caused by nuclear explosions). The farmers, surly and depressed, deride the questionable advice.

FEMA's rosier vision of the postattack United States, where life-affirming survivors will pick themselves up, brush themselves off, and pitch in to rebuild the country—"We are counting on you. . . to rebuild this great nation of ours," the film's president implores in an emergency radio broadcast—is shattered by *The Day After*. Nobody seems to be in that kind of mood, and for good reason.

But not everyone is dead, and not everyone is dying. It seems that life will go on, albeit miserably. And so the film rebuts not only the postattack optimists but also the nuclear doomsayers, who predict nothing but death for the postnuclear war world. The film makes a stronger point: Nuclear war need not be the end of the world to be the worst thing in the world. **—Edward Zuckerman**

Edward Zuckerman's book, The Day After World War III, *which describes government plans for surviving and rebuilding after nuclear war, will be published next spring by Viking.*

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ABC

BY ROBERT FRIEDMAN

A Movie Without Sequel

A few years ago, long before there was talk of a freeze in the air, I visited the factory outside Amarillo, Texas, where all of this country's nuclear weapons are assembled. Driving around the perimeter of the vast reservation known as Pantex, past the concrete "igloos" where the lethal weapons are stored, I was struck by the serenity of the scene. Farmers across the road were busy harvesting their winter wheat, and inside the restricted area itself cattle grazed contentedly. The temperature dropped 60 degrees that day, but the chill that came over me had nothing to do with the sudden change in weather.

I had a similarly eerie feeling while watching the opening montage of *The Day After*. The movie begins with shots of a railroad track running through golden fields, the stockyards at dawn, an empty stadium, a milk bottling plant—everything just as peaceful as a Hallmark card, and all of it, as we are warned in a parental advisory at the outset, about to be obliterated. For tucked away in the cornfields of eastern Kansas, literally in farmers' backyards, are dozens of missile silos, each of them targeted by Soviet warheads.

There is something inherently melodramatic and emotionally manipulative about this kind of movie making; it's like watching the *Jaws* of war. The characterizations are never very deep, only the terror is. Instead of showing children frolicking in the waves, unaware of the danger lurking below, we have children playing in the yard, unaware of what lies buried under the topsoil beyond the fence. The suspense is not whether the missiles will go off, but when—and just how bad the damage will be.

Waiting for the Bomb to drop is almost as painful as watching what happens next. For the first 45 minutes, *The Day After* is as flat and corny as the midwestern landscape. Each of the characters is introduced, soap-opera style: there's the distinguished heart surgeon (Jason Robards) whose daughter is leaving home; the farmer (John Cullum) whose oldest girl is getting married; the pregnant woman (Amy Madigan) who's about to give birth; the student (Steven Guttenberg) who's registering for classes at the state university. In the background, as these individual dramas unfold, is news of rising international tensions.

At first, no one seems to pay much attention to the images on television, the voices on the radio, or the headlines in the newspaper, but the frightening reality of events far from home slowly seeps in. In response to NATO deployment of Pershing and cruise missiles, the Soviet Union has begun to build up tank divisions along the Elbe River in East Germany. Although ABC officials, sensitive to charges that the network is playing

The farm family: Waiting for the Bomb

nuclear politics, have stated that the sequence of events leading up to war is intentionally vague—"I feel satisfied that there is enough ambiguity about who pressed the button first," Alfred Schneider, ABC vice president of broadcast standards, told *The New York Times*—in fact, it is the United States, or NATO as the case may be, that uses nuclear weapons first, detonating three atomic warheads over Soviet troops invading West Germany. (Screenwriter Edward Hume's scenario, though purely imaginary, is faithful here to the U.S. policy of "flexible response," which permits the use of nuclear weapons in retaliation against a conventional ground attack by the Soviet Union.)

What is unclear is which side launches its *intercontinental* missiles first. When, about 45 minutes into the film, we see the flash of a rocket reflected in a bedroom mirror, and then watch as half a dozen Minuteman missiles arc over Kansas City, we don't know whether the United States has ordered a preemptive first strike or is responding to a Soviet attack already underway. In either case, as an airman says, deserting his post at a local missile base, "The war is *over*."

The movie, however, is just beginning. From the moment the first mushroom cloud appears over the Kansas City skyline, *The Day After* is transformed from an inert mess into a gripping, relentless drama of human suffering. It is as if the film itself suddenly began to glow. For several minutes, we witness scenes of people being vaporized, of buildings being engulfed by firestorms, of houses and bridges collapsing under the pressure of the blast. Then the screen fades to an iridescent blue, and, after what seems like a prolonged silence, *The Day After* picks up the story of the survivors. For them, the future is unrelievedly grim. The farmer who takes refuge with his family in a basement fallout shelter, the airman who wanders the countryside foraging for candy bars, the heart surgeon who valiantly tries to comfort the wounded, all meet the same fate in the end. If radiation sickness doesn't get them, starvation, despair, or the breakdown of social order surely will. Only the cries of the pregnant woman's newborn baby offer a ray of hope—until we realize what kind of world it's being born into.

This is television of a kind rarely seen by American audiences, conditioned as we are to happy endings. Graphic depictions of the effects of nuclear war have long been taboo on network television, and ABC deserves a great deal of credit for producing this film and broadcasting it in the face of considerable opposition.

To assure some measure of "balance," ABC will air a one-hour panel discussion, moderated by Ted Koppel, immediately after the broadcast. And it has included books by Henry Kissinger, Edward Teller, and Herman Kahn, among others, on a recommended reading list that follows the movie's credits. But the sentiments of the filmmakers, and of the network, remain clear. After the final scene, in which a dying Jason Robards returns to the site of his home in Kansas City and embraces another dying man camped out in what was once his living room—a last, feeble gesture of humanity in a world soon to be devoid of humanity—the following message crawls up the screen: "The catastrophic events you have just witnessed are in all likelihood less severe than what would actually occur in the event of a full nuclear strike against the United States. It is hoped that the images of this film will inspire the nations of this Earth, their peoples and leaders, to find the means to avert the fateful day."

When was the last time a made-for-television movie said anything like that? □

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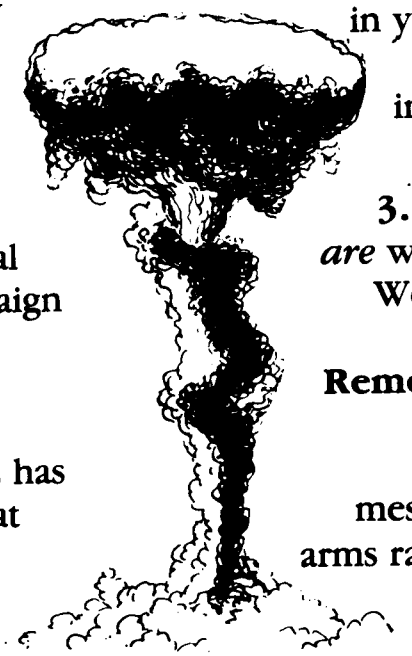
DON'T WAIT 'TIL THE DAY AFTER

On Sunday, November 20, tens of millions of Americans will view "The Day After," an ABC-TV movie depicting the people of Lawrence, Kansas, the day after a nuclear bomb has been dropped. Many who view the film may be left with the feeling there is no way to prevent this ultimate horror from happening.

That's where you come in.

Join with SANE and the National Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign in letting the American people know there doesn't have to be a day after. That if we work *now* we can prevent what ABC has captured so vividly. Here's what you can do:



1. Contact your ABC affiliate and make sure they plan to air the program. The right wing is trying its best to block the film's showing. Your input can ensure the program is aired.

2. Plan group viewings of the film in your home. Be sure to invite people who aren't already involved. Ask local reporters to come.

3. Spread the word that there *are* ways to prevent nuclear war. We'll send you a special "Day After" organizing packet.

Remember. This is a unique opportunity to reach tens of millions of people with a message of hope for ending the arms race. Please contact us today.

☐ Yes, I'd like a free packet on how to organize in my community around "The Day After."
☐ And while you're at it, sign me up to be part of the Arms Control Computer Network.*
I'm willing to lobby my representatives in Washington on:
☐ the nuclear freeze only
☐ other key arms race issues.

THE FREEZE

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____(h) _____(w)

Congressional district _____

Send to: **The Day After Project**, Nat'l. Freeze Campaign,
4144 Lindell Blvd., Suite 404, St. Louis, MO 63108,
314-533-1169.

SANE

*The Arms Control Computer Network is a national legislative alert system, linking citizen lobbyists from SANE, the National Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Friends of the Earth, Council for a Livable World, Greenpeace and the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy